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The growth of Higher Education in Somaliland:
Implications to the Higher Education–Development
Nexus

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Development Studies

2016

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Abstract:

The emergence of ‘knowledge *is* development’ discourses and endogenous growth theories during the 1990s propelled the position of higher education in the global development agenda. In sub-Saharan Africa, after more than a decade of neglect, since the mid 1990s the higher education sector is seen as crucial for enabling regional development. Consequently, it has experienced significant growth.

This growth highlights an alarming paradox. It is difficult to reconcile whether this expansion allows the region to benefit from higher education. Using Somaliland as a case study, this thesis explores this dilemma. It provides insights into how the higher education sector operates and to what extent its activities fulfil the proscribed role of the sector in development.

Methodologically, a mixed-method strategy is employed. Focusing on the provision of and demand for higher education, the study interviews key government officials, and higher education providers and beneficiaries (graduates). Fieldwork includes a tracer study of 625 graduates from six universities in three locations: Hargeisa, Burao, and Borama. Conceptually, the system of provision framework is utilised. In contrast to predominant assumptions of human capital theory, this framework provides an inductive approach capable of incorporating a range of factors, including non-economic features of the higher education sector. This study reveals five key findings.

First, the push towards privatisation in the provision of higher education evident across sub-Saharan Africa has significantly reduced the role of the state in the sector. In Somaliland, the sector is entirely in the hands of non-state actors. Conventional dichotomies—state versus non-state actors; public versus private—do not comply with prevailing definitions. Perceptions that the state is capable of governing the sector are also questionable.

Second, universities fulfil a wide range of roles, depending on the socio-economic environments in which they are embedded. In Somaliland, the sector was established to remedy specific ailments related to the post-war environment, in particular to provide something for young people to do to discourage them from disrupting the nascent peace.

Third, governance and financial challenges mean universities in Somaliland often do not have the required infrastructure to deliver on what prevailing discourses assume to be their two core functions—teaching and research. Almost entirely dependent on student fees, how universities function in reality is largely determined by strategies to attract students.

Fourth, demand drivers for higher education are multidimensional, encompassing both economic and non-economic factors that move beyond simple

cost-benefit analyses. While improved monetary returns in future is an important motivation, improved social status due to the social values associated with education is equally pivotal in decisions to pursue higher education. Other context-specific factors, notably limited employment opportunities, make university a suitable substitute for productive employment.

Fifth, reliance on employment statistics alone masks important features of graduate employment in Somaliland. The majority of graduates work in the education sector in multiple part-time jobs, with no future employment guarantees. Understanding what graduates actually do, including their employment conditions, is essential. Graduates depend overwhelmingly on social networks to secure employment, further highlighting the relevance of social factors in analyses of post-graduation outcomes.

Critical analysis of how the sector performs in particular contexts therefore requires an understanding that it operates in a web of multifaceted relationships encompassing a range of actors who interact in highly complex, context-specific social, economic, and political environments. Better understanding of the higher education-development nexus necessitates going beyond prevailing assumptions, especially those linked to human capital theory.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BoD	Board of directors
BoT	Board of trustees
CHE	Commission for Higher Education
CSC	Civil Services Commission
CV	Curricula vitae
EFA	Education for All (initiative of 1990)
GATS	General Agreement on Trade and Services
GDP	Gross domestic product
GER	Gross enrolment rate
GNP	Gross national product
GPA	Grade point average
HED	Higher Education Directorate
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RORE	Rate of return to education
SCOTT	Strengthening Capacity of Teacher Training
SCOTTPS	Strengthening Capacity of Teacher Training in Primary and Secondary Education
SLMoE	Somaliland Ministry of Education and Higher Education
SLMoP	Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development
SNM	Somali National Movement
SNU	Somalia National University
SONYO	Somaliland National Youth Organisation
SOP	system of provision
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
TDC	Togdheer Development Committee
TFP	Total factor productivity
THET	Tropical Health and Education Trust (King's College London)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UC	University council
UN MDGs	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
UoB	University of Burao
UoH	University of Hargeisa
UPE	Universal primary education
VC	Vice chancellor
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Higher Education and Development

The importance of higher education to development, in particular economic development, is extensively documented in academic and policy literature.¹ Through teaching and research activities, higher education institutions are reported to positively influence economic development through a number of pathways operating at both the micro and macro levels (Hawkes and Ugur, 2012; Oketch et al., 2014).

Although highly contested (discussed below), at the micro level, higher education (and education in general) is associated with positive development outcomes through contributing to increases in income. Since an educated labour force is presumed to be more productive than one with lower levels of education, and since labour is paid at its marginal product,² educated labour is expected to earn more in labour markets. This relationship was formalised by Jacob Mincer (1974) through the Mincer earnings function, which posits that a large part of earning differentials can be explained by differences in worker education levels (as well as experience).

At the macro level, the mechanisms connecting higher education to economic development are numerous. These mechanisms are, however, built on the premise that individuals with higher levels of education are endowed with skills and knowledge that allow them not only to be productive in their jobs, but to be able to innovate and create new knowledge, and to adopt and utilise knowledge created elsewhere (cf. Barro and Lee, 2010; Barro and Sala-i-Martin, 1995; Benhabib and Spiegel, 1994; Bloom et al., 2006; Lucas, 1988; Mankiw et al., 1992; Nelson and Phelps, 1966; Romer, 1990).

In this body of literature, the impact of higher education (as well as other levels of education) on development is also reported to transcend those directly related to

¹ This thesis uses the development economics theoretical literature, which predominantly explores the relationship between higher education and development through the lens of economic development. Although the correlation between higher education and development is not limited to economic development and can be analysed via a wide range of development features that are non-economic, this thesis focuses mainly on the relationship between higher education and economic development. Throughout this thesis, therefore, development is largely used to refer to economic development.

² What a worker earns is equal to the amount of output he/she produces. Higher levels of productivity lead to higher output levels and therefore to higher wage earnings.

economic outcomes. Higher education is associated with a host of positive externalities impacting both the individual and society at large. These externalities link education in general to low infant mortality, political stability, democratisation processes, improvements in public institutions and public sector service delivery, and reduction in poverty and inequality, just to name a few (McMahon, 1999, 2004; McMahon and Oketch, 2013). Some of these non-market benefits, such as improvements in institutions, are also found to be crucial in facilitating economic growth (Acemoglu et al., 2005; North, 1990).

The social and economic benefits associated with higher education noted above beg questions about whether this sector is a panacea for the social and economic challenges that many countries in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region face, and whether increasing the stock of labour with higher levels of education in the economy would, *inter alia*, allow these countries to capture benefits associated with the sector. The fact that the higher education sector in SSA has grown tremendously since the 1990s, begs a further question, which is the overarching question driving this study: how is the sector performing with regard to its role in the development of the region?

The number of universities in the region has grown from less than three dozen universities in 1960 (Zezeza, 2006) to about 668 in 2009 (Varghese, 2009). Apart from the growth in the quantity of institutions, the entrance of private providers has also broadened the diversity of providers within the sector. Although public institutions continue to exist, the sector is also occupied by a diverse range of private providers of different sizes, types, and orientations (Collins, 2013; Levy, 2007; Teferra and Altbach, 2004; Varghese, 2006).

The increase in the number of institutions has consequently widened access and allowed prospective students an opportunity to pursue higher education. This is especially important for those students who may not have been able to secure entrance to the single public university that many countries in the region established in the immediate post-independence era. As a result, the number of students enrolled in universities has also increased. Although enrolment rates for the region as a whole are still low compared to other regions in the world (Barro and Lee, 2010; UNESCO, 2009), between 1970 and 2008 the number of students enrolled in the higher education sector in SSA rose from fewer than 200,000 to over 4.5 million (UNESCO,

2010). And, if the 2010 projections by the World Bank are accurate, by 2015 the number of university students in Africa (as a whole) would reach 18 to 20 million (WB, 2010).

The rapid growth of the sector that has been experienced since the mid-1990s has led to major transformations. On the provision side, the higher education landscape of one national university that many countries in the region established in the immediate post-independence era no longer exists (Ajayi et al., 1996; Teferra and Altbach, 2004). On the demand side, the arduous entry requirements that meant only a few prospective students gained access to higher education and that these individuals were largely guaranteed employment upon graduation is also no longer the norm. Although elements of continuity exist, the higher education sector in the SSA region has undergone significant transformations that have overhauled the fabric of higher education provision.

Although the significant transformation experienced by the higher education sector in SSA is widely covered in the academic and non-academic literature (Collins, 2013; Havergal, 2015; Varghese, 2006), questions about how the sector is performing with regard to the theoretical expectations of its role in economic development are difficult to answer. There are a number of reasons for this. Two are pertinent for this study.

First, analysing sector performance is constrained by how to accurately reconcile its turbulent history with its recent growth. Although the sector has undergone significant growth since the mid-1990s, this growth masks a tempestuous history fraught with years of neglect that resulted in a severe deterioration of the sector. The economic collapses experienced by many countries in SSA from the late 1970s and the subsequent enrolment of many SSA economies in the stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank triggered significant changes in education sector policy. One of these changes was the shift of resources away from the higher education sector to the primary level of education.

The World Bank justified the shift of resources from the higher to lower levels of education on the basis of the highly influential findings of human capital theory

empirics—the rate of return to education (RORE)—which postulates that social and private returns to the primary level of education are higher at the lower levels of education compared to the higher levels (Psacharopoulos, 1994, 1980, 1973; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002). RORE findings encouraged both national governments and donor agencies to prioritise the primary level of education.

Although RORE findings have been heavily criticised in their theoretical and methodological underpinnings (Bennell 2002, 1996a, 1996b), they nevertheless triggered one of the most decisive shifts in priorities in the history of education in the SSA. The legacy of RORE can still be seen in the global education agenda today; for example, the ‘Education for All’ (EFA) initiative and universal primary education (UPE) under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs).

The decisive shift of resources from the higher education sector meant that the decade of the 1980s was a lost decade for the higher education sector in SSA. The significant deterioration experienced by the sector in not only physical infrastructures, but in teaching and research capacities has been well documented (Ajayi et al., 1996; Brock-Utne, 2003; Coombe, 1991; Mamdani, 1993; Samoff and Carrol, 2003; UNESCO-BREDA, 1992).

To some extent, theoretical developments during the 1990s, in particular the rise of ‘knowledge *is* development’ discourses (OECD, 1996, p. 7) and the emergence of different variants of endogenous growth theories (Lucas, 1988; Romer, 1990), rehabilitated the role of higher education in development. As previously noted, the number of higher education institutions has also significantly increased. Nonetheless, it remains difficult to assess whether the sector has been able to fully recover given the extent of deterioration and the fact that for many countries in the region the sector only had a decade of development before the onslaught began. Here, it is difficult to reconcile whether the current transformation the sector is experiencing is both qualitative (i.e., the rebuilding of teaching and research infrastructure) and quantitative (number of institutions) in nature, or simply the latter.

Second, reconciling the past and present is made even more difficult by the crucial shortcomings of the key theoretical assumptions that are used to analyse the relationship between education (in general) and economic development. In

development economics, the relationship between education and development is predominantly analysed using human capital theory. Since its formalisation in the early 1960s by Schultz and Becker (Becker, 1964, 1962, Schultz, 1961, 1960), human capital theory has been the theoretical tool of choice for the analysis of education in economics.

Human capital theory operates on two central assumptions. First, education is an investment akin to physical forms of investments that individuals deliberately make today with the hope of improved (mostly) pecuniary returns in the future. Second, investments in education (also in health, for example) are expected to increase the productivity level of individuals and, as a result, these individuals increase the productive capacity of the economy.

The formalisation of human capital theory in the 1960s led to the emergence of the field of economics of education (Blaug, 1985). This theory also inspired a vast body of empirical literature analysing the impact of education on improving economic growth and development at both the micro and macro levels. This empirical literature is vast. Teal (2011) points out that the relationship between education and wage returns, for instance, is one of the most studied relationships in empirical economics.

While the empirical literature provides important insights into the mechanisms connecting education in general with economic growth and development, this literature is highly contested. For one, the bulk of the analyses in this literature are econometric in nature, featuring regression tests between proxy variables for education and a host of economic indicators. As a result, though extensive, the empirical literature only deals with a small aspect of the education sector, leaving important questions—such as those surrounding the provision of and demand for education—outside analysis (Fine and Rose, 2001; Rose, 2006).

The predominance of econometric analyses is not unique to the education sector. This merely reflects the evolution of mainstream economics from the period of what is often referred to in the literature as the ‘formalist revolution’ of the 1950s, when the use of mathematical methods and technical models was heavily promoted (Milakonis and Fine, 2009). This form of analysis, however, is extremely narrow in

its descriptive capacity. In particular, it is unable to account for and incorporate the significant changes that have taken place in the sector.

In the context of SSA in particular, important features of the transformed higher education sector (taking into account its turbulent history) are consequently taken as given within regression analyses. This crucially restricts a realistic assessment of how the transformed higher education sector is performing in terms of the development of the region.

1.2 Investigating the Transformed Higher Education Sector in SSA: Somaliland Case Study

The recent and rapid expansion of the higher education sector in Somaliland (a post-conflict, self-declared republic in the Horn of Africa that was formerly part of Somalia) makes it an interesting case study for the evaluation of how the transformed higher education landscape in SSA is performing with regard to its role in the development of the region. The recent history of Somaliland diverts from that of many other countries in SSA. While other countries in the region were embroiled in structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s, Somaliland (then part of Somalia) was embroiled in protracted uncertainties that turned into full-blown war in 1988. Despite these historical specificities, the post-war expansion of the higher education sector in Somaliland has largely followed trends seen elsewhere in the SSA region.

Prior to the establishment of its first university, Amoud, in 1998, Somaliland had no institutions of higher education. This is not a surprise considering the tumultuous history of the country, which is characterized by protracted periods of political, social, and economic upheavals. However, during the post-war period from the late 1990s and more so during the last decade, the education sector across all levels grew rapidly. For the higher education sector in particular, the sector grew rapidly from one university in 1998 to twenty-eight in 2013.

From its emergence in 1998, higher education provision in the country has been in the hands of non-state actors. In 2011, the president of Somaliland, Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, decreed the establishment of the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), a semi-autonomous body responsible for monitoring,

auditing, and accrediting institutions of higher education. Until then, the sector had been operating in a complete *laissez-faire* environment, whereby anyone could, in effect, establish a university without having to obtain a license or adhere to any minimum requirements or standards. As one interview respondent explains:

All you needed was to rent a house somewhere and put a sign, calling it, let's say your name, 'Nimo University'. That was it! The next day you would have a long queue of students waiting to register. Things have changed a little bit now, but there is still a lot of freedom especially outside Hargeisa (interview with an official at Admas University, Hargeisa, 23 June 2013).

This *laissez-faire* environment, together with the high demand for university education, provided the necessary condition for the rapid growth of the sector in Somaliland. This growth has been unprecedented, especially as regions constituting present-day Somaliland did not hitherto have a history of higher education. Although Somali National University (SNU) was established by the military regime in the early-1970s when Somaliland was part of Somalia, this university was located in Mogadishu, some 850 km south of Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. For the majority of people residing in present-day Somaliland, therefore, a university institution was something they had never encountered. For most, university education was not something that they themselves or their immediate relatives had ever been able to access.

The post-war emergence of the sector and its rapid growth is therefore unparalleled. For many residents of Hargeisa, a city of approximately 725,000 people where fifteen universities were found to be operating in 2013, this is a bewildering experience. The excerpt below offers a glimpse of perceptions on the ground in Hargeisa.

Today I got lost on my way to the University of Hargeisa. I stopped and asked an old lady selling bananas by the side of road near Imperial Hotel where the university was. She responded, 'What University of Hargeisa? The whole of Hargeisa is universities!' (fieldwork notes, 12 January 2013).

In addition to the growth in the quantity of higher education institutions, the sector is comprised of providers with diverse ownership structures. While the first initiatives to create universities in Somaliland from 1998 onward were carried out by

a coalition of local communities and their diaspora counterparts and the first three universities—Amoud, Hargeisa and Burao established in 1998, 2000, and 2004, respectively, were established via this type of alliance—a diverse range of private entrepreneurs started to enter into the provision of higher education from the mid-2000s.

The entrance of entrepreneurs in the provision of higher education is, however, not straightforward. Notwithstanding the prevailing *laissez-faire* environment, entrepreneurs faced a crucial barrier until the mid-2000s. The perception that only a coalition comprised of highly educated individuals or individuals with experience running a university could open a university acted as a barrier for entrepreneurs to enter higher education provision. This also allowed the coalitions of local community and their diaspora counterparts a complete monopoly until at least the mid-2000s. These early alliances mobilised highly skilled individuals, including those who used to work in the higher education sector prior to the war. These individuals were also required to teach.

Although there was a lag period, this barrier was quickly overcome when local and diaspora entrepreneurs became exposed to and embedded in the global trends in higher education trade. Suddenly, having lower levels of education was no longer an obstacle and higher levels of education (and experience) no longer a requirement because entrepreneurs in Somaliland could easily form franchise agreements with universities in neighbouring countries and import the whole university to Somaliland.

In exchange for royalties (a proportion of student fees ranging from 10 to 12 percent, with fees ranging between USD 500 to 750 per annum), the parent institution would provide to the Somaliland entrepreneur the use of its name, curricula, teaching material (photocopies of text books), instruction on administrative issues and other technical processes (including advice on exams formats), as well as issuance of degrees to students upon completion. All entrepreneurs in Somaliland had to worry about was the modest start-up capital to rent a building, hire instructors, advertise, and register students. Owing to this ease of entry, imitations quickly followed. As a result, franchises of universities from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia have been the fastest growing segment of the higher education sector in Somaliland.

The rapid growth of the sector has also been facilitated by the prevailing high demand for university education. A combination of demographic factors—more than two-thirds of Somalilanders are under thirty years old (UNDP, 2012)—and the expansion of lower levels of education during the post-war period have contributed to the growing demand for university education. The flexible entry requirements and the wide availability of evening classes has also allowed older individuals, professionals, and civil servants to pursue university education, an opportunity that was not available to them prior to the war. Furthermore, the significant remittance income that households in Somaliland receive from their relatives abroad (Hammond, 2013; Lindley, 2010), has also been key in increasing the demand for university education.

The combination of the above drivers led to a surge in the number of individuals demanding university education in Somaliland. In 2013, it is estimated that approximately 18,223 students were enrolled in universities across the country (HIPS, 2013). This enrolment figure places Somaliland on par with or above many countries in the SSA region in terms of participation rates, as shown in the tertiary gross enrolment rates comparisons in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Tertiary Gross Enrolment Rates—Regional Comparison

Country	Tertiary Gross Enrolment Rate (%)	Reference Year
Eritrea	2.03	2014
Ethiopia	2.79	2005
Kenya	4.09	2009
Djibouti	4.92	2011
Somaliland	5.81	2013
Tanzania	3.65	2013
Sub-Saharan Africa	8.55	2013

Source: Except for the gross enrolment rate (GER) figure for Somaliland, all other data are taken directly from the UNESCO UIS website, <http://data.uis.unesco.org> (accessed 22 November 2015). Tertiary GER for Somaliland is calculated using UNESCO 2012 estimates of the proportion of the tertiary-age population in the whole of Somalia (9% of the Somalia population, which is estimated to be 10.1 million). This proportion of tertiary-age population (9%) is applied to the Somaliland population, which is estimated to be 3.5 million, in order to obtain the tertiary-age population (313,520). Actual higher education enrolment data for Somaliland (18,223) is taken from HIPS (2013).

Examining the expansion of the higher sector in Somaliland can provide important insights into how the contemporary higher education sector operates in SSA and to what extent the activities of institutions within this sector are fulfilling the proscribed role of the sector in development. In particular, the Somaliland case study provides a crucial indication of how the sector performs within fragile contexts

characterised by weak state capacity. While fragility is a difficult concept to define, two broad elements are generally used to describe fragile states: the inability of a state to deliver basic social services and the inability of a state to provide security to its population (Gelbard et al., 2015; IMF, 2013). Of the thirty-six countries in the world that are considered fragile, over half are found in Africa (WB, 2015). According to the African Development Bank, the twenty fragile countries located in Africa are home to approximately 20 percent of the region's population (AfDB, 2015, 2014).

Examining the expansion of the higher education sector in Somaliland thus provides insights that are relevant to understanding how the sector operates in a large part of the SSA region. This is particularly pertinent since countries that are considered fragile tend to be faced with a host of structural challenges, ranging from low institutional capacities to poor infrastructures.

The Somaliland case study also brings forth and challenges a number of assumptions that are normally taken as given in the predominant analyses linking the higher education sector to positive development outcomes. The Somaliland case study reveals that developing a clear understanding of how the higher education sector is performing in a particular context requires bringing into analysis the multifaceted relationships between the state, higher education providers, and beneficiaries, which are located in complex social, political, and economic contexts.

1.3 Research Approach

1.3.1 Thesis aims and research question

The overall purpose of this thesis is threefold. First, by using the Somaliland case study this research seeks to shed light on the contemporary landscape of the higher education sector in SSA, in particular the large part of the region that is considered fragile. This study argues that for a critical understanding of how the higher education sector fares in terms of its role in the development of the region, it is necessary to position the provision of higher education at the analytical centre. For the purpose of this thesis, a focus on provision entails investigation into *who* the key actors are, *why* they entered into provision and, through an investigation of their governance and financial structures, *how* institutions created by these actors function.

Second and relatedly, this thesis aims to investigate the beneficiaries of the sector in order to more fully understand how the contemporary higher education sector in the region is performing with regard to development. In particular, it is necessary to identify the factors that compel individuals to pursue this level of education. Additionally, understanding what graduates do after completing their studies reveals a key mechanism linking higher education to development outcomes.

Third, the thesis aims to contribute to the body of literature about the post-war social and economic development of Somaliland. Although Somaliland as an area of study has been growing, this growth has largely been driven by studies on conflicts, peacebuilding and post-war political developments (Balthasar, 2013; Bradbury, 2008, 2003; Bryden, 1999; Hoehne, 2015, 2009; Renders, 2012), as well as studies on migration, diaspora, and remittances (Farah, 2009; Galipo, 2011; Hammond, 2013; Hammond et al., 2011; Hansen, 2013, 2007; Healy and Sheikh, 2009; Kleist, 2007; Lindley, 2010, 2009). Studies on other post-war social and economic development issues have been few. With these three aims in mind, the research for this study has been guided by the following question:

To what extent is the provision and demand for higher education in Somaliland aligned with the dominant theoretical propositions of the role of higher education in development?

The above research question is operationalised based on the following sub-research questions below:

- Who are the key actors in the provision of higher education in Somaliland and what motivates their entrance into the sector?
- What is the relationship between higher education providers and the Somaliland government in terms of sector governance?
- How are higher education institutions financed?
- What drives the high demand for higher education?
- What are the employment outcomes of university graduates?

1.3.2 Analytical approach

In to order address the research objectives and question above, this thesis employs two analytical approaches. First, it begins by presenting the evolution of the theoretical literature pertaining to the role of higher education in development by focusing on the implications of different theoretical developments to the formulation of higher education policy in the context of SSA.

Second, the predominant theoretical tool used in the analysis of education—human capital theory—largely inspires econometric-based analyses, which leave crucial elements of the provision and demand for education outside analysis; elements that cannot be reduced to quantitative variables. However, as processes surrounding education in general, from its delivery to its demand, are not merely economic and are instead embedded in contextual specificities, this research utilises the system of provision (SOP) approach as an analytical framework to guide the analysis of the higher education expansion in Somaliland.

In the analysis of education, the SOP approach, developed by Ben Fine and others (Bayliss et al., 2013; Fine, 2002; Fine and Hall, 2010; Fine and Leopold, 1993; Saad-Filho, 2000), views education as a system comprised of complex material and cultural relationships, structures, and processes that encompass all activities—from the building of education facilities, admission of students, training and recruitment of teachers to what takes place within the classroom. In contrast to human capital theory, the SOP approach is not a theory. Rather, SOP is a framework allowing the intellectual flexibility to incorporate evolving socio-economic structures and relations that influence how the higher education sector in a particular context operates.

1.3.3 Defining higher education

According to the formal definition of higher education adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education on 9 October 1998, and which is used by leading agencies on education (e.g., UNESCO and the World Bank), higher education is defined ‘as all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities’ (UNESCO, 1998).

Although the above definition is comprehensive, for the purpose of this study it is also problematic. For this definition to work—for higher education to be defined as such—institutions providing the training must be ‘approved by the competent state authorities’. In the case of Somaliland, however, the sector emerged from the late-1990s driven by non-state actors in a complete *laissez-faire* environment, where anyone could, in effect, establish a university. Most of the twenty-eight universities operating in Somaliland in 2013 were established without any form of prior authorisation and many, especially those outside the capital, continue to operate without any permission from the Somaliland government.

Taking the above into account, this study defines higher education simply as: *a type of post-secondary level of education that leads to the award of an academic degree upon completion*. As the system of higher education in Somaliland only consists of universities, throughout this thesis the terms ‘higher education’, ‘university education’, and ‘tertiary education’ are used interchangeably to refer to this definition.

1.4 Methodology

This thesis draws upon research conducted between January and October 2013 in three towns (Hargeisa, Burao and Borama) located in three different regions in Somaliland. The justification for the selection of these three towns is largely due to the presence of a large number of education institutions (across all levels). In these three towns, however, significant differences exist. While Hargeisa boasted fifteen universities, Borama and Burao only had two universities each in 2013.

The period of the main research was preceded by a five-week pre-fieldwork observation trip to Hargeisa between April and May 2012. This trip was used to build relations with stakeholders in the education sector, as well as to observe the broader characteristics of the education sector in general, and the higher education in particular. The trip was also used to collate grey and secondary literature related to the education sector in Somaliland.³

³ During the course of the main research, I had an opportunity to work with the Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development in the preparation of a national employment strategy. This work allowed me to participate in the countrywide research designed to capture regional-specific labour

1.4.1 Data collection: Actors, motivation, and how institutions function

To investigate key actors behind the rapid expansion of the higher education sector, this study utilises semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. Data collection took three stages. The first stage involved interviewing a wide range of higher education stakeholders—government officials, university officials, former and current university students, select members of the public, current and former civil servants, and officials working in the aid and development sector.

The aim of this part of the research was not to draw a representative sample of all actors, but to purposely select a sample that included the most important players that have shaped or continue to shape the higher education sector. A process of chain-referral was used to ensure that all key respondents were included, specifically those that were not identified *a priori*. Initial interviews were used to learn more about the evolution of the sector in Somaliland and identify individuals and entities that have been particularly important in the expansion of the sector.

Once the wider set of data was collected, the second stage of data collection involved semi-structured interviews with a smaller number of specific individuals who were involved in the creation of select universities. Members of the community who were involved in the creation of community universities as well as the owners of the selected private universities, were interviewed. Relevant officials in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and officials in the CHE, were also included in this part of the sample. In total, this part of the research interviewed thirty respondents across the three research sites. In most cases, interviews lasted for an hour to one and half hours, and were often carried out on more than one occasion.

The third stage of this aspect of data collection was largely spent at the selected six universities across the three research towns. In Hargeisa, the University of Hargeisa, Admas University College and Golis University were chosen. In Borama, two of the universities operating there, Amoud and Eelo, were selected. In Burao, the

market trends. At the end of this exercise, I was involved in writing up the employment strategy document for the ministry. One of the recommendations of this document is to open a job centre in Somaliland to help ease the information flow between seekers and employers. The first job centre in the country was opened in July 2013.

University of Burao was chosen. This part of the research is ethnographic in nature. It involved long periods of observation and of process tracing, such as processes surrounding admissions, recruitment of academic staff, and the establishment of new courses.

The justifications for the selection of these six universities across the three sites are as follows. First, the six selected universities capture the main types of universities operating in the country: community, local-independent, and regional-franchise universities (see Chapter 4). Second, in each of the three research sites, these universities are among the largest in terms of the size of their student pool.

1.4.2 Data collection: Graduate tracer study

The second part of data collection involved university graduates. This part of the research is purposive in nature. The principal respondents were university graduates from the selected universities (Hargeisa, Golis, Admas, Amoud, Eelo, and Burao). A tracer survey methodology was used to trace university graduates and capture their labour market outcomes and experiences since graduation. Tracer surveys are commonly used in educational research to track the correlation between education and employment, and to generally capture post-graduation employment and unemployment experiences (Al-Samarrai and Bennell, 2006).

The tracing exercise was driven by two main criteria. First, five cohorts of graduates covering the years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 were selected. Although the 2012 cohort had only been in the labour market for less than a year at the time of this research, their inclusion was motivated by the need to capture graduate experiences in the labour market during their first year after graduation. Second, four academic streams (business administration, computer science [or information and communications technology], civil engineering, and law and Sharia) were initially identified to be popular faculties that had so far produced the most graduates.

The above criteria were relaxed once in the field. Since the six selected universities were established at different times, not all universities graduated students across all the sampled yearly cohorts (2008–2012). For example, as Admas was established in 2006, the first batch of graduates completed their studies in 2009.

Along the same line, the first batch to graduate from Burao and Eelo was in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Across the whole sample, 2011 is the only year that all six selected universities produced graduates. The implication here is that not all six universities are represented in the five selected graduate cohorts (2008–2012).

Furthermore, when it became difficult to find graduates of specific yearly cohorts with specific degrees, the criteria were further relaxed to include graduates from other fields of study within the selected yearly cohorts. In the end, only one criterion remained—graduates had to have graduated from the six selected universities within the period of 2008 to 2012. In the end, the tracer survey interviewed 625 graduates.

Tracing 625 graduates was a huge undertaking and involved a number of strategies. First, research assistants from the five cohorts across all researched universities were employed. These research assistants were trained in methodology and the ethics of data collection. Using former graduates as research assistants was a very useful strategy because these graduates both had information about the whereabouts of their former classmates and were able to mobilise a large number of them in a relatively short period of time.

Second, public holidays, such as Ramadan, where it proved difficult to interview graduates during the day, were also used to productive effect. During the month of Ramadan, for example, *Iftar* (evening meals with groups of graduates) was arranged and, with the assistance of research assistants, which offered opportunities to interview a large number of graduates after they broke their daily fast.

Third, in order to include graduates who work away from their hometowns, some interviews were postponed until Eid, when a large number of graduates return home for the holiday. Using former graduates as research assistants at each research site meant a large number of interviews could be done during this period.

Of the 625 graduates, 21 percent are female graduates and the remaining 79 percent are male. The proportion of traced females in this study is lower than the proportion of female graduates reported by the CHE in its 2013–2014 annual report. In this report, the CHE notes that on average female graduates comprise a third of all graduates.

The primary reason for the lower number of females traced by this study is largely due to difficulties tracing female graduates who were not employed at the time of this research. Although this study tried to overcome this problem by employing a large number of female research assistants who were also graduates, the exercise still proved difficult mainly because the majority of female graduates were married and, given their responsibilities at home, could not find time to be interviewed. The majority of unemployed females interviewed for this study had to be interviewed at home. On many occasions, these interviews were interrupted and had to be carried out numerous times until they were complete.

Appendix 1 provides in-depth analysis of the sample, including the proportion of graduates from each yearly cohort and their fields of study.

1.4.3 Data collection: Non-graduate tracer study

A comparative sample of non-university graduates across the three research sites was also collected. Although respondents in this group were randomly selected from the main market centres in each research site, two main criteria were used to select respondents. First, respondents were not current university students, nor did they have had a university degree obtained inside or outside Somaliland. Second, the ages of respondents had to be from twenty-three to thirty-four years old. This age group was found to correspond with that of the bulk of university graduates. Once the respondents were selected, a similar tracer study was used to capture their employment history covering the last three years.

The main aim of collecting this data was to compare the experiences of non-graduates with that of graduates in the labour market. This section of data collection is based on interviews with 297 respondents; 57 percent male and 43 percent female. The collection of this data was slightly easier than that of graduates (described above). Market areas, tea shops, and other public areas where a large number of people usually congregate were targeted in order to find respondents.

Appendix 2 provides a summary of this sample, including information on the highest levels of education that these respondents completed.

1.4.4 Positionality

As a returning diaspora, carrying out research in Somaliland provided a number of opportunities and challenges. One of the key opportunities is the ability to become an insider quite quickly and gain access to key information and individuals who are crucial for facilitating research in the country. Regardless of being returning diaspora, any Somali is able to locate him or herself in the prevailing kinship social structure, which makes becoming part of society relatively easy. Through membership in specific kin groups, it is possible to form relationships quickly and overcome access issues commonly faced during research.

However, there are also a number of challenges that severely impacted the main researcher during fieldwork. One is particularly crucial. As a returning diaspora, there are specific social connotations that can implicate the data collection process. These can be very difficult to overcome. One of these relates to the perception that diaspora women return home to find husbands. This perception means that interviewing some male respondents was extremely difficult and the information obtained is questionable. Since many male respondents wanted to impress the researcher, who was supposedly looking for a husband, key information they provide, such as income data, is often incorrect or skewed to suit the circumstances. This became evident when the income information collected by the research assistants differed significantly from that of the main researcher. To resolve this issue, the main researcher spent more time interviewing female graduates and allowed the research assistants to carry out most of male graduate interviews. In general, however, as is discussed in Chapter 8, income data collected for this study should be read with caution.

1.4.5 Original contribution of the thesis

Given the recent history of Somaliland, the first and foremost contribution this thesis hopes to make is to provide the first in-depth analysis of the higher education sector in the country and, in the process, capture an aspect of post-war development that has received less attention so far. For the wider SSA region, this study adds to the limited critical analysis of the contemporary higher education sector beyond the remits of human capital theory (see Chapter 3 for a full exposition of this theory).

1.5 Thesis Structure and Overview

The subsequent discussions in thesis are outlined as follows. Chapter 2 provides a brief background on Somaliland, with a focus on trends in education prior to the war, as well as selected features of contemporary Somaliland society and economy. The purpose of this chapter is to ground and situate discussions in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 analyses the evolution of the theoretical debates pertaining to the role of higher education in development. The discussion specifically emphasises how shifts in theoretical thought implicate education policy formulation in the SSA region, especially during the structural adjustment period. The second part of the chapter brings into analysis selected macro and micro-level empirical evidence. The third and final section of the chapter discusses the shortcomings of the predominant theoretical and empirical literature in interrogating the higher education-development nexus, and introduces the system of provision (SOP) approach as an alternative analytic framework.

Chapter 4 begins the analysis of higher education provision in Somaliland. It focuses on key actors responsible for the emergence and growth of the sector and the motivations behind their entrance into provision. The chapter presents two key actors responsible for the provision of higher education in the country—the coalition of local communities and their diaspora counterparts; and local and diaspora entrepreneurs. The discussion shows that although the creation and dissemination of knowledge and the production of an educated labour force responsible for economic growth and development is the conventional role assigned to higher education institutions in development, universities can and do play multiple roles that are far from economic ones. The higher education sector emerged in Somaliland as a remedy to a wide range of social ailments that are specifically related to the post-war environment.

Chapter 5 continues the discussion on the provision of higher education by looking at how universities in Somaliland operate via an investigation into their governance and management structures. The chapter reveals that although the Somaliland state has been trying to increase its role in the sector through the establishment of the CHE in 2011, the effectiveness of the CHE is crucially constrained by severe structural problems. These range from the lack of legal

mandate, limited human and financial capacities to the unclear division of labour between the CHE and the Higher Education Directorate (HED) at the Ministry of Education. The chapter also analyses features of institutional-level governance. The findings reveal that governance structures are entrenched in the social-economic and socio-political relations on the ground. How universities are governed has little to do with ensuring the management of resources to direct the activities of institutions towards positive development outcomes. Rather, governance revolves around a number of other factors, chief among them the need to adhere to the particularities of existing social relations on the ground.

Chapter 6 continues the discussion on how universities operate in Somaliland by focusing on their financial structure. Discussions in this chapter reveal that since universities depend almost entirely on student fees to operate, key functions of universities—such as the admissions process, the establishment of new courses, and the recruitment of academic staff—are intricately embedded in strategies to boost student numbers and consequently to improve the financial base of universities.

Chapter 7 moves the discussion to the demand side of the higher education sector in Somaliland. This chapter analyses key drivers of demand for university education. The discussions in this chapter reveal that although economic motivations are important, non-economic factors, such as the hope for improved social status given the high social value associated with university education, are also important. The association of the ‘educated person’ with respect, trust, and voice shows that the perceived benefits of this level of education go far and beyond pecuniary benefits. Limited employment opportunities, making university education a suitable alternative, is also found to be an important driver compelling individuals to pursue university education.

Chapter 8 continues discussion of the demand side of higher education by focusing on graduate employment outcomes. This chapter utilises data from the tracer study to analyse graduate experiences in the labour market. The discussion in this chapter shows that although graduates fare better in the labour market when compared to non-graduates, an analysis of the jobs held by graduates reveals that the bulk of graduates are employed in the education sector, where employment arrangements are highly casual.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by summarising the main findings presented in the earlier discussions.

Chapter 2: Somaliland—A Brief Overview

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides brief background information on Somaliland. The first section looks at history of education provision, with a focus on the low levels of education. The second section highlights key features of Somaliland society, such as the kinship structure, which are crucial in facilitating social relations and economic transactions. The final section briefly outlines the Somaliland economy. The discussion in this chapter aims to provide a foundation for subsequent discussions.

2.2 Education

The history of education in Somaliland largely mirrors its political history: both have experienced numerous periods of turbulence and uncertainties. Although the history of the western form of education in Somaliland commenced with the advent of colonialism in the later part of the 19th century, ideas about formal education predated the arrival of the British. The location of the country, in what Somali academic Jama Mohamed calls the ‘highway of world civilisation’ (Mohamed, n.d., p. 5), meant that Somalis (especially those in coastal areas) not only had come into contact with people from diverse regions of the world, but that they also travelled far beyond the region in the quest for trade or religion. The implication here is that by the time the British were introducing education in Somaliland, ideas about different forms of education were not entirely new to Somalis (Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007).

The provision of colonial education in Somaliland faced a number of challenges. By the time Somaliland received its independence on 26 June 1960, the education sector was extremely underdeveloped compared to, for instance, other British colonies in the region, such as Tanganyika (now Tanzania) (Dawson, 1964). Three key reasons were behind this underdevelopment. First, from 1899 and for about two decades after this, the colonial government was heavily preoccupied with costly military expeditions against the anti-colonial Dervish forces led by Sayyid Muhammad Abdille Hassan, who opposed British rule (Dawson, 1964; Kakwenzire, 1986; Olden, 2008).

Second, in contrast to other colonies where profitable natural resources could be

exploited for profit, Somaliland presented the British with no such benefits. Apart from livestock, with its inherent volatility, the colonial administration had no other revenue- generating resources available in the colony and the administration struggled to sustain itself financially. The administration relied on grants and aid from the Imperial Treasury in London to cover its expenditures (Kakwenzire, 1986; Kittermaster, 1928). Taking into account the costly expeditions against the Dervish forces, the Treasury Office was often not in favour of increased expenditure for social services, including education (Olden, 2008).

Third, the initial efforts to establish schools by the administration prior to the Second World War faced huge resistance from parents and religious leaders who associated secular education with Christianity (Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007; Kakwenzire, 1986; Olden, 2008). At times, this resistance turned into confrontations that had devastating outcomes (ibid.).

After obtaining independence, Somaliland joined with Somalia, a territory in the south that also extends to the north-east. At this time, Somalia was administered by Italy under UN Trusteeship. On 1 July 1960, both territories were united to form the Somali Republic, which is commonly known as Somalia. Similar to trends seen in other post-independence African countries, expanding education to the masses was one of the key objectives of the newly formed Somalia. Although some improvements were made in the first decade of post-independence, crucial challenges limited progress.

First, the education sector was crippled by structural challenges that emerged as a result of trying to consolidate two systems that had followed two very different development trajectories and were administered by two very different systems of governance, using two different languages (Italian and English) (Castagno, 1960). The two education systems were not only structured differently, but were also at very different stages in their development (Dawson, 1964). Furthermore, the fact that the Somali language remained unwritten and schools across the country continued to use different languages for instruction (i.e., Italian, English, and in some cases Arabic) hindered far-reaching progress (Abdi, 1998; Laitin, 1976).

Second, the new country also struggled fiscally. It had not managed to expand its economic base and relied heavily on external aid to fund government expenditure (Metz, 1992; Nelson and Harold, 1982; Samatar, 1988). Related to this, the poor fiscal position of Somalia was exacerbated by the irredentist claims in which the new country was embroiled—a pan-Somali nationalist agenda for a greater Somalia, which at this time aimed to unite five regions inhabited by the Somali people in the Horn and East Africa that were divided in the scramble for colonies in 1884–1885 (Castagno, 1960; Dawson, 1964; Sheikh Abdi, 1977).

Due to these claims, the new state was neither able to fully commit itself to internal developmental issues (such as the expansion of education), nor to form productive relations with its neighbours, mainly Kenya and Ethiopia, that could have facilitated economic development. For example, in 1964, only a few years after independence, Somalia was already involved in a war with Ethiopia.

Civilian rule in Somalia came to a halt in October 1969 when a group of disgruntled military officers staged a bloodless coup d'état that brought General Siaad Barre to power. A year later, the military regime declared that scientific socialism—an amalgamation of Socialism and Islamic principles—was to be the new official developmental ideology for the country.

With material and intellectual backing from the Soviets, the country immediately pursued a number of ambitious social and economic programmes. In particular, five major initiatives completely transformed the education system in the country. First, the regime nationalised all education institutions; in 1969, private education enrolled about 31 percent of students across the country (Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007).

Second, the military government also made education free and compulsory for all children between six and fourteen years old (*ibid.*). Third, the regime finally put an end to a contentious subject that previous administrations could not resolve: in 1972, it introduced Latin (or Roman) script for writing the Somali language, paving the way for a more cohesive education system.

Fourth, the introduction of the Somali script enabled the military regime to carry out mass literacy campaigns in urban and rural Somalia from 1973 to 1975

(Abdi, 1998; Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007; Hoben, 1988; Sheikh Abdi, 1981). As the majority of the Somali population at this time were nomads and followed a transhumant form of nomadic pastoralism, traditional modes of education delivery designed for settled communities, such as permanent or fixed location schools, were largely inefficient. The radical literacy programme, which involved a closure of secondary schools and the mobilisation of students, teachers, and other civil servants to go to rural areas to temporarily live with the nomads in order to teach them to read and write, boosted the number of literate people in Somalia from less than 5 to over 50 percent (ibid.).

Fifth, with financial support from Italy, the regime upgraded the two-year University Institute of Somalia in 1970 into a full-fledged university, Somalia National University (SNU). This move significantly expanded access to higher education, which prior to this time was only accessible through foreign scholarships. The SNU grew quickly to include thirteen faculties, 800 instructors, and 7,500 students (Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007).

Although the above initiatives, which were all introduced during the first half of the 1970s, were responsible for the first major transformation of the education sector since independence, most of the progress that was made was not sustained and, in many cases, was reversed only a few years later (Bradley et al., 1992; UNICEF, n.d.). This is similar to other projects carried out by the military regime, which tended to be short-term and oriented to quick results; for example, this tendency is explicitly captured in the popular colloquialism, '*Oktobar 21—tankeeda ka garsii*' that roughly translates as 'finish it before 21 October', which is the day the military regime came to power (Sheikh Abdi, 1981, p. 170). As such, initiatives in the education sector (apart from the introduction of the Somali script) did not structurally transform the existing education infrastructure. The implication here is that once the regime diverted its focus and resources away from the education sector toward the security sector (Samatar, 1988), the education sector immediately started to crumble.

The disastrous outcome of the war with Ethiopia that the military regime initiated in 1977 to reclaim back the Ogaden Region in the quest to reignite *Soomaalinimo*, the age-old irredentist claim for a greater Somalia, marked the beginning of the end for the education sector, as well as for the Somali state. The shift

of alliance by the Soviets from Somalia to Ethiopia not only led to the defeat of Somalia by Ethiopia, but also to the loss of Soviet backing, which was a key source of material and non-material support for Somalia.

The fiscal difficulties worsened from the late 1970s as a result of the economic crisis that engulfed Somalia, along with other parts of Africa. By the early 1980s, the regime abandoned the ideology of scientific socialism and subscribed to budgetary stabilisation support and, by extension, the neoliberal reforms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, since the majority of economic activities were taking place in the shadow economy that had developed as a result of the regime's inefficient policies, the neoliberal changes implemented by the IMF had little impact on the economy (Little, 2003; Mubarak, 1997). During the 1980s, the economy of Somalia as reported in official documents was probably less than 30 percent of the actual size of the economy (Little, 2003, p. 30).

The following years after the war with Ethiopia also saw growing public discontent with the military regime and the establishment of opposition groups, mainly outside the country. One of these opposition groups was the Somali National Movement (SNM), established in London in 1981 by a group of Somali diaspora mainly from the *Isaaq*, a kinship group to which the majority of people residing in Somaliland belong. The SNM eventually moved its activities to nearby Ethiopia and started confronting the Somali government, both through propaganda and guerrilla-style attacks. Government reprisals, which also targeted the *Isaaq* civilian population that the regime perceived to be supporters of the SNM, were dire.

The decade of the 1980s was thus one of falling welfare across the country. The deterioration of the education sector (as well as other social sectors, such as health) in the north-western regions of Somalia (present-day Somaliland) during this time was particularly grim. In addition to the widespread decline in livelihoods that was experienced by many communities across Somalia, households in the main cities located in present-day Somaliland, such as Hargeisa and Burao, experienced a further decline in their welfare because they were exclusively targeted and exposed to harsh treatment by the military regime (Africa Watch, 1990).

The widespread uncertainties that characterised this period to a large extent disrupted a sense of normal life and inevitably further weakened the already failing education sector. To elaborate the deterioration of this sector, in the school year 1975–1976, a total of 133,605 students were enrolled in the first grade across Somalia; by 1979–1980, the number of students in the first grade had dropped to 48,272 (Williams and Cummings, 2015). This trend was also found across all levels of education. According to a UNESCO study, the gross enrolment ratios for four to twenty-three year olds fell by half between 1980 and 1988 (cited by (Abdi, 1998).

The political uncertainties of the 1980s turned into a full-blown war in 1988. In that year, the government of Ethiopia and Somalia entered into a peace accord and agreed to cease supporting each other's rebel groups operating within their borders. The SNM was thus forced to make a move to establish itself within Somalia. In May 1988, the SNM attacked government barracks in Burao and Hargeisa, and the regime responded heavily by the aerial bombardment of major towns in Somaliland (Bradbury, 2008).

Since the civilian population were seen as supporters of the SNM, the bombardments did not spare civilians. Between 50,000 and 60,000 people were killed and close to half a million fled to neighbouring Ethiopia and, to a lesser extent, Djibouti (Africa Watch, 1990). Major towns, such as Hargeisa, the current capital of Somaliland, and Burao, the second largest town in the country, became ghost towns emptied of residents.

The outbreak of the war brought the failing education sector to a halt. It is estimated that of the 219 education institutions across Somaliland that were functioning prior to the civil war (see Table 2.1 below), 70 percent of them were damaged or destroyed by the war (Bradley et al., 1992). Education material and facilities that were not completely destroyed by the bombardments were subsequently looted. Teachers and students who had survived the air and ground attacks fled to neighbouring countries. Those with social connections and adequate economic resources proceeded further afield.

Table 2.1: The state of education in the north-western regions of Somalia (present-day Somaliland) in 1988

Schools	Number of Institutions	Number of Students
Primary	174	42,650
Secondary	20	7,976
Technical	3	837
Other	22	3,978

Source: The Somaliland Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (1991) cited by (Bradley et al., 1992).

The declaration of Somaliland independence on 18 May 1991 marked the end of large-scale war and the beginning of reconstruction efforts, although these were interrupted by further waves of conflict that lasted, albeit with different degrees of intensity, until the mid-1990s (Balthasar, 2013; Renders, 2012). Although the declaration of independence was not recognised by other countries in and outside Africa, it triggered the initial wave of returnees from refugee camps in neighbouring countries. As they arrived back to rebuild their lives, returnees were faced with scenes of overwhelming physical devastation and reconstruction had to start from scratch (Bradbury, 2008). The account below from the owner of Alpha University in Hargeisa captures the scenes he witnessed upon his return to Hargeisa from a refugee camp in Ethiopia as a teen in 1991.

There was nothing in Hargeisa when we returned in 1991. To get food, people had to go back to Ethiopia. We survived on one type of food [maize] for six months. There was nothing. [...] You saw people standing in places where their houses used to be, but the houses were no longer there. [...] I remember the first time I drank a Fanta. It was the first time in four years that I had a soft drink. [...] Then electricity appeared in Hargeisa in 1992. A businessman brought a diesel generator and supplied electricity to two shops between 6:00 pm and 8:30 pm. All of us kids used to go there every evening to just stare at the electricity. [...] But what was abundant was military equipment. There was everything! We used to play with anti-tanks. [...] I remember my friends said if we put anti-tanks on the road, the cars would explode. We did put them on the road, but there were hardly any cars on the roads those days [...] (interview, Hargeisa, 20 August 2013).

The post-war reconstruction efforts were largely initiated and carried out by non-state actors, especially as formal state structures were not installed until 1993. From 1993, the nascent state played a minimal role as it was not only fiscally

constrained, but was also heavily embroiled in peacebuilding and state-making projects (Balthasar, 2013; Bradbury, 2008; Renders, 2012). Local communities across Somaliland joined forces with their diaspora counterparts to rehabilitate social and economic institutions in their locales following what Hoehne and Ibrahim (2014) describe as '*dhis degankaaga*' (build your own locale). In addition, diaspora and local entrepreneurs also joined in and started to provide key social services, such as health and education, that the new state was in no position to provide.

Although the aforementioned non-state actors have been key in both the reconstruction and continual growth of the education sector, the Somaliland state has gradually been increasing its role, especially at the primary level of education. This has particularly been the case since the current administration came to power in 2010. In 2011, the administration initiated free primary education, doubled teachers' salaries from USD 50 to 100, and took over the management of a large number of schools that were established by the community (SLMoE, 2012a).⁴ The state has also been increasing its budgetary allocation to the education sector. However, the sector continues to depend heavily on support from international aid and development agencies. The Somaliland Ministry of Education reported in 2011 that there were nineteen international aid agencies and eleven local NGOs that supported the education sector (ibid.). However, given its lack of international recognition, this support does not go directly to the state, but rather is channelled through donor projects (ibid.).

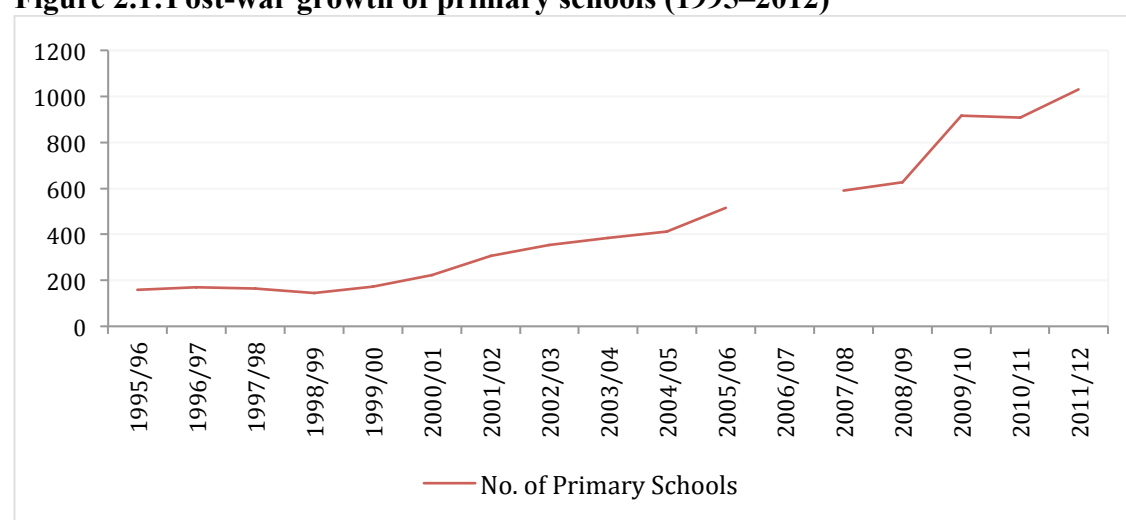
Despite persistent interruption during the first half of the 1990s as a result of further waves of civil conflict in parts of Somaliland, the education sector has more or less recovered and has surpassed pre-war figures across all levels (see Figures 2.1 to 2.4 below). From the years 2000 to 2012, for instance, primary enrolment grew from 12,000 to over 200,000; during this period, secondary school enrolment also grew from a mere 450 to over 36,400 (SLMoE, 2012b). Consequently, urban primary and secondary school enrolment rates at 52 and 24 percent, respectively, are on par or better than in neighbouring countries, such as Ethiopia and Djibouti (ibid.). However, given the concentration of the education infrastructure in urban towns, rural areas of

⁴ Free primary education was added to the Somaliland constitution: Article 15:7.

Somaliland still lag behind in the provision of education across all levels (SLMoE, 2012b).

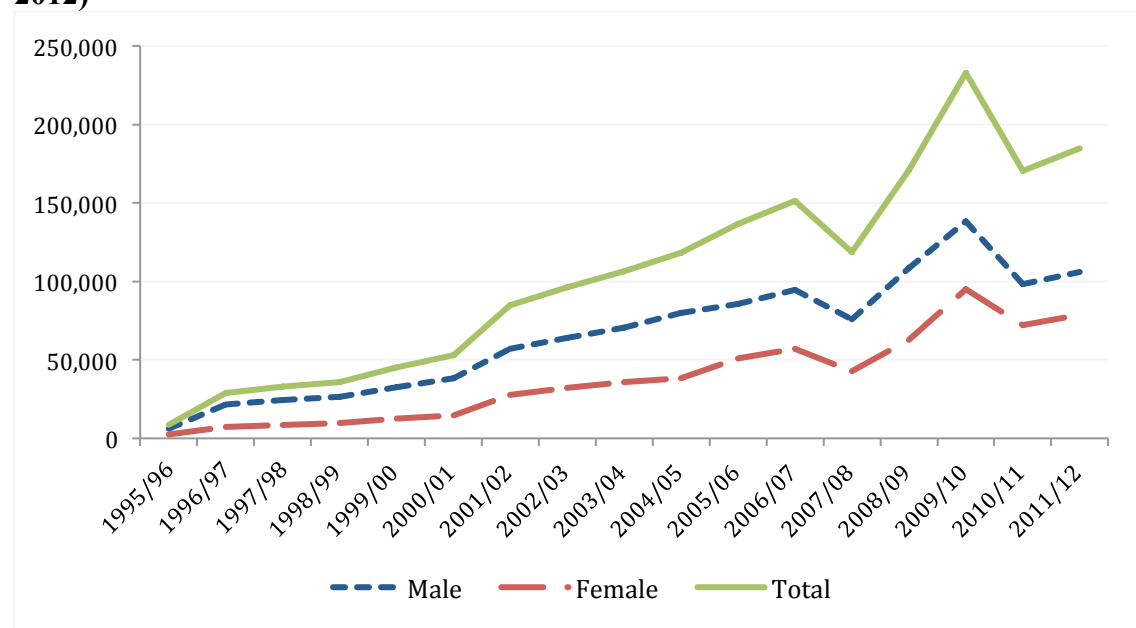
Furthermore, although gender disparity in primary and secondary schools continues to improve, girls still lag behind. In 2012–2013, for example, boys and girls comprised 56 and 44 percent, respectively, of all primary school enrolment (Ismail, 2014). At the secondary level, girls constituted only 31 percent of all students in 2012–2013 (ibid.). Gender disparity is also found in the composition of teachers. At the primary level, for instance, female teachers comprised only 19 percent of the total 7,298 teachers who worked at primary schools across Somaliland in 2012–2013 (ibid.).

Figure 2.1: Post-war growth of primary schools (1995–2012)



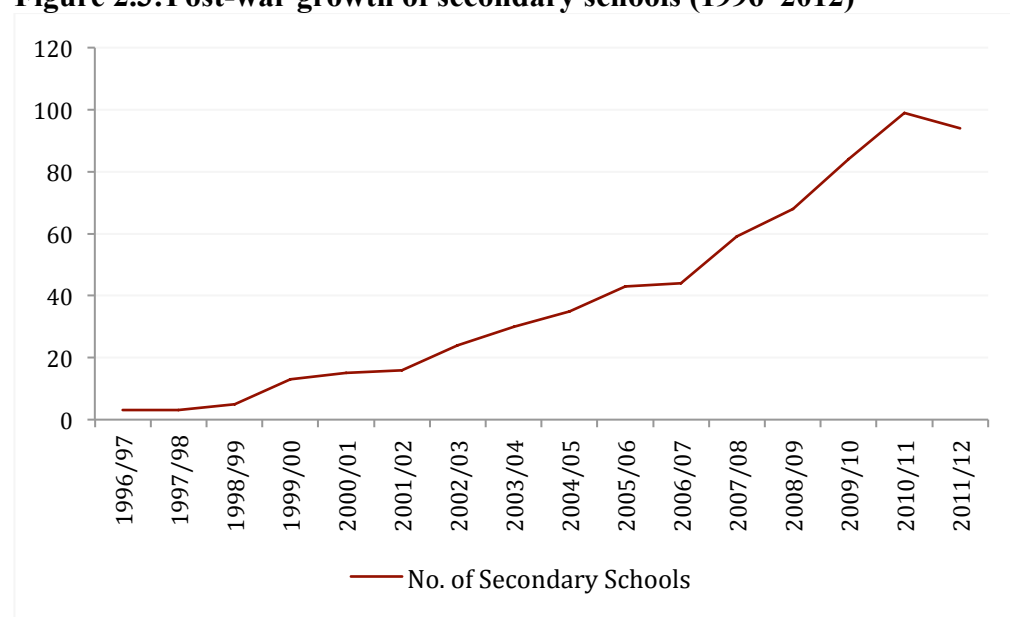
Source: Graph created by author using data from *Somaliland in Figures*, 9th and 10th editions (MNPD, 2011, 2012). Data for 2006–2007 was not available. The dip in 2011 is attributed to the lack of data and not the closure of schools. 2011 is the first year that the Somaliland Ministry of Education, instead of UNICEF, carried out a census of schools across the country. The ministry reports that more than sixty primary schools failed to return the questionnaire and their data are not included in the final count (SLMoE, 2012a, p. 7).

Figure 2.2: Post-war growth of primary school enrolment per gender (1995–2012)



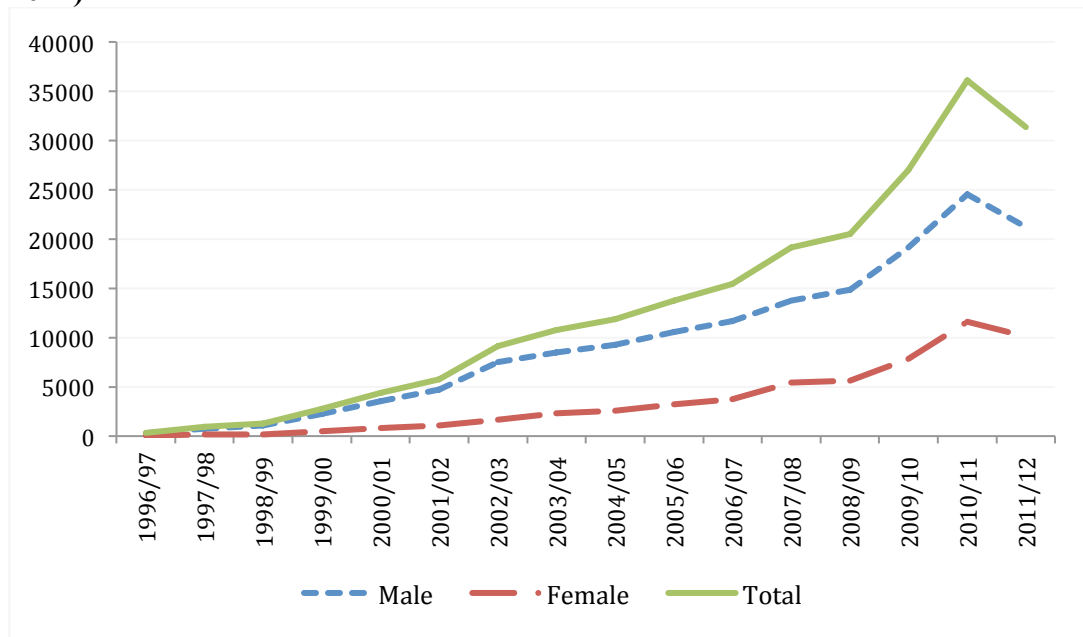
Source: Graph created by author using data from *Somaliland in Figures*, 9th and 10th editions (MNPD, 2011, 2012). As noted in the graph above, the dip in 2011 is a result of data collection problems faced by the Ministry of Education.

Figure 2.3: Post-war growth of secondary schools (1996–2012)



Source: Graph created by author using data from *Somaliland in Figures*, 9th and 10th editions (MNPD, 2011, 2012). The dip in the academic year 2011–2012 is related to data inconsistency rather than the closure of secondary schools.

Figure 2.4: Post-war growth of secondary school enrolment per gender (1996–2012)



Source: Graph created by author using data from *Somaliland in Figures*, 9th and 10th editions (MNPDP, 2011, 2012). The dip in the academic year 2011–2012 is related to data inconsistency rather than the closure of secondary schools.

2.3 Society

The majority of people residing in Somaliland are Somalis who speak the same language (Somali) and are predominantly Muslim. The official Somaliland population was estimated to be 4.4 million in 2012 (SLMoP, 2013). This figure, however, seems to be much higher compared to the findings of a recent Somalia-wide census carried out by the United Nations Population Fund during 2013–2014 (UNFPA, 2014). Using the UNFPA data, the Somaliland population (based on the sum of the population estimates of the five regions within the Somaliland borders) is estimated to be around 3.5 million.⁵

Similar to other parts of the Somali regions, the population is overwhelmingly young. Over two-thirds of the population is under thirty years old (UNDP, 2012, p. 201; UNFPA, 2014). About 46 percent of the population is under the age of fifteen (UNDP, 2012, p. 201; UNFPA, 2014). These data suggest that Somaliland (and the Somali regions as a whole) is experiencing a demographic youth bulge. Given the

⁵ The five regions included in the count are: Awdal, Waqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sool, and Sanag. The fact that the borders of Sool and Sanaag are disputed between Somaliland and Puntland was not taken into account in this estimate.

prevalence of insecurity in the Horn of Africa in general, donor agencies such as the World Bank have raised concerns about this demographic group, noting that unless this group is provided with productive alternatives, they would join ‘piracy, rebel groups, and organised crimes’ (WB, 2014, pp. V–VI). This perception is often reflected in donor funded-projects in Somaliland. For the purpose of this study, this demographic feature of the population is crucial in understanding the expansion of the education sector in post-war Somaliland.

There are two other features of Somali society that are particularly important in situating the subsequent discussions in this thesis: the increased pace and level of urbanisation; and the structure of Somaliland society.

2.3.1 Urbanisation

Somaliland society has undergone significant changes during the post-war era. One of these changes is the increase in pace and level of urbanisation. While in the period prior to independence in 1960 it was estimated that at least 90 percent of the Somali population resided in rural areas (Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007), the recent census found that 42 percent of the Somali population, including Somaliland, were urban dwellers (UNFPA, 2014).

The increase in the pace and level of urbanisation in the post-war era can partly be attributed to the post-war settlement patterns, whereby the majority of those who had resided in the rural areas prior to the war opted to settle in urban towns, such as the capital Hargeisa, upon their return from refugee camps in neighbouring countries (Gundel, 2002; UNDP, 2006, pp. 28–30). Given the destruction of rural livelihoods during the war, such as poisoning watering wells [see (Africa Watch, 1990)], former rural residents had to settle in urban areas in order to access support from aid and humanitarian agencies, which mostly operated in the main urban centres. The presence of aid and humanitarian agencies, as well as all government institutions, in the capital Hargeisa, for instance, also acted as a pull factor for a large number of internally displaced individuals from rural areas and other insecure parts of the Somali regions.

The diaspora angle also factors into the increase in the pace and level of urbanisation. As a significant proportion of households across urban and rural

Somaliland rely on remittances from abroad to sustain their livelihoods (Hammond, 2013; Lindley, 2010), it is not uncommon for remittance senders to move their relatives from rural to urban centres so that they have better access to social services. This is captured in the excerpt below.

My elderly mother is in Denmark and about three years ago she received her backdated pension payments and the first thing she did was to get a house in Burao and move her relatives from the rural areas to Burao. This was a family of six. [...] More recently, she also did the same thing again and moved her other relatives, another family from the rural areas, to Burao. [...] When these families moved from rural areas to town, they basically sold off all their livestock. They went to town with nothing. But maybe it is not bad as in town their children can access good education (interview with a member of the diaspora in Hargeisa, 20 February 2013).

Access to education is one of the key motivations for moving families to urban areas. As discussed above, the education sector in Somaliland is largely biased towards urban areas (SLMoE, 2012b). For the remittance senders, education is seen as an important step toward getting their families in Somaliland to become self-reliant (Lindley, 2010).

2.3.2 Social structure

Although the people of Somaliland speak the same language (Somali) and observe the same religion (Islam), the society is by no means homogenous. The society is structured along a segmentary lineage system where each individual is born into specific groups and sub-groups usually referred to in the Somali literature as different levels of ‘clan’ (Lewis, 1967; Mohamed, 2007).

For the majority of Somalis, particularly those residing in northern Somali regions (including Somaliland) who have historically followed transhumance nomadic pastoralism, membership in a particular group is determined by paternal blood links.⁶ Through a system of reckoning of the agnatic male ancestors known as ‘*abtirisiimo*’, each Somali is able to place him or herself within a specific kinship group. Using *abtirisiimo* also allows Somalis to establish how closely related they are

⁶ Although paternal blood links are the determining factors for membership in a certain clan or sub-clan, maternal relations are crucial for facilitating many aspects of social relations.

to one another—the fewer the numbers of agnatic male ancestors invoked before a common one is met, the more closely related the individuals are.

Apart from the mere act of placing individuals within specific segments, this kinship system also defines a set of mutual responsibilities and obligations that members of each group and sub-groups have for each other, as well as for members of other groups. Some of these obligations, such as participating in the contribution and the collection of *mag* (compensation) are specified in *xeer* (Somali customary law), while others are social norms based on long-established systems of mutual reciprocity.

For the purpose of this thesis, three points about this social structure are worth noting. First, within this social structure there are specific (gender-biased) obligations to which each member must adhere. Each adult man, for instance, is expected to be able to contribute (materially and non-materially) to his kin group whenever he is called upon. Failure to fulfil the expected social obligations could result in the loss of respect and social status—vital social capital and prerequisites for almost all social relations and economic transactions in Somaliland society—not only to the individual, but also to his close relatives.

Within this system, therefore, relatives with means are expected to support their less prosperous kin. This process works to distribute resources between households and allows poor households to overcome consumption constraints. To some extent, this process also helps to dampen the overall inequality in income distribution.⁷ Incidences of better-off households sharing resources with their poor relatives residing in urban or rural areas are widespread (Hammond, 2013). Apart from a direct transfer of cash and non-cash resources, such as food, it is also not uncommon for better-off households to foster children of their poorer relatives, especially those residing in rural areas where education facilities are scarce (*ibid.*). The better-off households then become responsible for the maintenance of these children, including paying for their education (*ibid.*). In the education sector, incidences of fees being paid for by relatives are widespread.

⁷ In 2013, the Gini coefficient (a measure of income inequality ranging from 0 to 100, the higher the score the more unequal the society is) for urban Somaliland was 42.6, while in rural areas it was slightly higher at 45.7 (World Bank, 2014).

Although this system of mutual reciprocity provides a crucial safety net for households in an environment where formal credit facilities and public social welfare do not exist, it can be a source of a significant amount of pressure to individuals. If, for instance, a man is not able to secure employment that allows him to support his family and contribute to the welfare of his kin when needed, he would lose a lot more than mere income (Gardner and El-Bushra, 2015). If the individual loses his social standing, his ability to form economic relations is also severely implicated. Within this environment, then, discussion about the conditions of being employed or unemployed have to be grounded in this social reality.

Second, in addition to the mutual obligation to support each other, this social system plays a crucial role in facilitating economic transactions. Since kinship and *xeer* are built on established norms of mutual reciprocity and trust (as well as heavy social sanctions when an individual diverts from the expected norms), in combination they provide the necessary conditions for economic exchanges to take place. Due to this social system, the Somali economy did not entirely collapse during the protracted periods of uncertainty, war, and the complete collapse of the Somali state and with it all institutions (Little, 2003). Using kinship and *xeer* provided an alternative to the collapsed formal institutions that were designed to protect property rights and enforce contracts.

Third, kinship is also an important source of social connection that plays a crucial role in facilitating the flow of information in labour markets. Given the lack of recruitment agencies (before the establishment of the first one in Hargeisa in July 2013), and the fact that only a few of formal jobs are advertised in the public domain, kinship connections provide an important channel for transmitting information about jobs between recruiters and job seekers (see Chapter 8). Furthermore, kinship connections also provide an important tool for reference checking in an environment where formal referencing procedures are absent.

It would be incorrect to assume that the system of resource redistribution *always* works. The economic constraints that many households in Somaliland face, especially during periods of drought and increased food prices, put tremendous pressure on the system and can render it unfeasible. The system can also lead to strained relationships within kinship groups. For instance, in a recent research study on Somali youth

migration to Europe, some households in Somaliland note that after reaching out to their relatives numerous times to ask for the monetary support they need to pay ransom for their children being held hostage by human smugglers (and traffickers), their relatives no longer answer their calls and it is highly unlikely that they would be able to approach their relatives again in the future, even in case of emergencies (Ali, 2016, p. 53).

Furthermore, existing differentiation within kinship groups means that not all members have equal access to the resources being redistributed. Some households do indeed fail to capture the benefits of this system and become destitute even though their kin might be well off. Therefore, similar to other forms of traditional resource redistribution, this system can fail.

2.4 Economy

Finding key economic data for Somaliland is difficult. Part of this difficulty is due to protracted insecurity in the region (Somaliland is considered part of Somalia within the international arena), which has restricted international comparative surveys, such as the Demographic and Health Surveys, from taking place.⁸ However, a number of surveys have been carried out in Somaliland in conjunction with donor support. They provide crucial information. These surveys include the *Labour Force Survey* carried out by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2012 and the *Household and Enterprise Survey* carried out by the World Bank in partnership with the Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development in 2013. This section draws heavily from the results of these two surveys.

The Somaliland gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012 was estimated to be USD 1.39 billion (WB, 2014b).⁹ The GDP per capita was estimated to be USD 348, making Somaliland the fourth lowest ranked country in the world with regard to GDP per capita. Table 2.2 below places Somaliland in a wider perspective by comparing it with neighbouring countries.

⁸ In 2015, the World Bank scored Somalia 20 out of a possible 100 with regard to the country's statistical capacity.

⁹ Not adjusted for purchasing power parity. The exchange rate used is USD 1.00 = 6,464 SLSh.

Table 2.2: GDP—regional comparison

Country	GDP [USD billion]	GDP per capita (current USD)
Kenya	60.9	1,358
Ethiopia	54.8	565
Tanzania	49.2	949
Eritrea	3.9	755
Djibouti	1.6	1,805
Somaliland	1.4	348

Source: Apart from figures for Somaliland, the reference year for the GDP figures for all other countries is 2014 and this figure was obtained from <http://data.worldbank.org> (accessed 21 November 2015). Using the GDP and population estimates from the World Bank data site, the author calculated GDP per capita figures for all of the countries except Somaliland. Figures for Somaliland are from 2012 and were sourced from (WB, 2014b).

Aside from low GDP per capita, employment figures in Somaliland are also relatively low. Both labour force participation rates and the proportion of working age population (aged fifteen to sixty-four years old) employed were reported to be much lower than the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) average (WB, 2014). According to the *Labour Force Survey*, only 23 percent of the working age population was employed (also in WB, 2014). The proportion of employed youth, in particular those aged fifteen to twenty-four years old, was a dismal 5 percent (ILO, 2013). In the following sections, key features of the Somaliland economy are outlined, with a focus on primary employment sectors.

2.4.1 Livestock

The structure of the Somaliland economy has changed very little since the colonial period. Exporting live livestock (mainly sheep and goats and, to a lesser extent, camels and cattle) continues to be the backbone of the economy and consequently the largest single contributor to the GDP. In 2012, the sector contributed approximately 30 percent of the Somaliland GDP (WB, 2014b). The sector is also the biggest earner of foreign currency, accounting for 85 percent of foreign exports earnings.

Although the livestock sector is the single biggest contributor to GDP, it is the second largest employer in the country, accounting for 27 percent and 20 percent of female and male workers, respectively (ibid.). The types of jobs created by this sector range from rearing herds by the producers in the countryside, the *dilals* (the middlemen and women) in the local livestock markets, and butchering and selling meat in the local markets to those involved directly in the export sector. A point to

note here is the heavy involvement of women in the different segments of the sector—from the initial rearing of goats and sheep to the selling of live animals and meat in the local markets. However, women are mostly absent in the export segment of the sector, which is by all means the most profitable.

There are three important features of the livestock sector that are worth mentioning. First, as the single biggest contributor to GDP and as the single biggest earner of foreign exchange, the livestock sector highlights the inherent vulnerability that exists in the Somaliland economy. Somaliland inevitably suffers from the same problems of export concentration and primary commodity dependence that are found in other countries in the SSA region. The compounding issue for Somaliland is that the key commodity is livestock, which is more susceptible to the misfortunes of nature, such as drought, which is a constant feature owing to Somaliland's arid ecology. Further environmental concerns have been raised about whether the size of the livestock population, estimated at 19,674,000 in 2012, can be sustained by the available pastureland (SLMoP, 2013).¹⁰

Second, export concentration becomes even more problematic when a large part of it is destined for one recipient. The destination for a large part of Somaliland livestock is the countries in the Gulf, mainly Saudi Arabia, followed by Yemen and Dubai. This destination concentration makes Somaliland vulnerable to changes in external factors, which was clearly illustrated by bans imposed by Saudi Arabia (and later on by Yemen in Dubai) in 1998 to mid-1999 and again in 2000 until 2009 due to fears about Rift Valley Fever. These two bans had severe ramifications for Somaliland's economy and for livelihoods in both urban and rural areas.

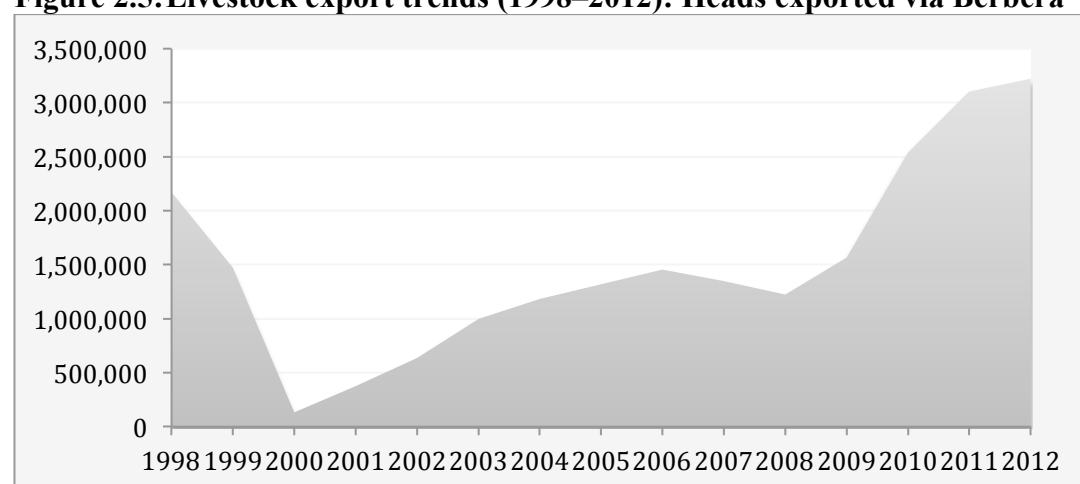
The third feature of the livestock sector, especially at the profitable export segment, is its high degree of monopolisation. The livestock bans and the subsequent stringent requirements for certification by the Gulf governments led to the exit of a large number of small-scale exporters who were unable to comply. From the second

¹⁰ The estimate on livestock population is calculated by the planning ministry and is based on the 1975 Somalia census of livestock population and the annual growth rate: goat: 2.4 percent; sheep: 1.7 percent; camel: 1.1 percent; and cattle: 1.2 percent.

half of the last decade, the export of livestock has been dominated by a single Saudi investor-trader and a handful of local political elites (Majid, 2010).

Data up to 2012 show that livestock exports via the Berbera Port to the Gulf countries has fully recovered since the ban was lifted in the late 2000s. As Figure 2.5 below depicts, at the apex of the ban in 2000, a little more than 100,000 animals were exported; however, by 2012, 3.2 million heads were exported from the country (SLMoP, 2013).

Figure 2.5: Livestock export trends (1998–2012): Heads exported via Berbera



Source: Graph created by author using data obtained from the *Somaliland in Figures* reports (2004–2013). Saudi Arabia banned the import of livestock from Somaliland between 1998 and mid-1999, and again from 2000 to 2009 amid fears about the outbreak of Rift Valley Fever.

2.4.2 The sales and services sector

The sales and services sector is the second largest contributor to the economy, accounting for 20 percent of the GDP (WB, 2014b). This sector has been growing steadily in the post-war period and is driven by the activities of private entities involved in wholesale and retail businesses linked to the import trade, telecommunications, airlines, and remittance businesses. Although this sector includes a handful of large-scale formal businesses, it mostly contains a great number of small businesses selling imported food and non-food consumer goods. The majority of businesses in this sector are family owned and tend to employ family labour. However, it is also the case that this sector has been the source of job creation in the country (ILO, 2013a). In 2012, the sector was reported to have been the biggest employer, accounting for 63 percent and 56 percent of employed men and women, respectively (WB, 2014b).

Important players in this sector, which also includes the financial sector, are money transfer companies known locally as '*xawala*'. Xawala companies play an important role in the local economy by facilitating remittance transfers. Remittance inflows into Somalia (Somaliland included) are estimated to be USD 1.2 billion (Hammond, 2013), a figure close to the country's GDP. Remittance inflows are vital in sustaining households' livelihoods in Somaliland (ibid.). As noted earlier, they are particularly crucial in shaping access to education (Lindley, 2008). Further, remittance income played an important role in keeping the Somaliland economy afloat and in smoothing household consumption shocks during the period of the livestock bans (SLMoP, 2011b).

2.4.3 Industries

The industrial sector in the country is still in a nascent stage. The sector is fairly small and employs a modest number of people. In 2012, the sector consisted of one fiberglass factory, about six mineral water and beverage companies, a plastic factory, two soap and detergent factories, and an animal slaughtering company. Capacity for employment creation is limited in this sector owing to the size of their operations. A beverage company, the Somaliland Beverage Industry, reports the highest number of workers, with seventy-seven employees in 2012 (SLMoP, 2013).

2.4.4 Agriculture—farming

Given the arid ecology, farming plays a minor role in the Somaliland economy. Approximately 10 percent of the total geographical area of the country (137,600 square kilometres) is suitable for cultivation; as of 2012, only 3 percent of this area was cultivated (SLMoP, 2013). This means Somaliland imports a large number of food items from neighbouring countries. Household welfare, therefore, depends on the price movements of imported food.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the history of education in Somaliland, key features of Somali society, and the structure of the Somaliland economy. The information presented helps to ground and situate discussion in ensuing chapters. The

next chapter analyses the theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to the role of higher education in development.

Chapter 3: Higher Education and Development—The Ever Shifting Theoretical and Policy Space

3.1 Introduction

Although the western model of higher education in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region only emerged towards the end of the 19th century,¹¹ and at the time of independence many countries in the region did not have any system of higher education (Ajayi et al., 1996; Mamdani, 2008), in its short life span the higher education sector has been subject to major shifts in theoretical perspectives and policy directions regarding its role in the development of the region.

From the early post-independence era in the 1960s to the mid-1990s, the perception of the role of the higher education sector in development, as viewed by development practitioners, advisers, and policy makers, went full circle—from being a vital part of the modernisation and Africanisation project (Ajayi et al., 1996; Samoff and Carrol, 2003; Teferra and Altbach, 2004) to being an expensive luxury that countries in the region could not afford (Brock-Utne, 2003; Mamdani, 1993; Mkandawire, 2011) to being a crucial determinant of development that countries could not afford to be without (Task Force, 2000, p. 9).

This chapter traces the main theoretical shifts that have led to significant changes in policy perspectives regarding the role of higher education in development, with a particular focus on the SSA context. The chapter begins by sketching the evolution of the theoretical literature and the subsequent policy directions that emerged. This section of the chapter is divided into three distinct yet interrelated epochs.

¹¹ The history of higher education in Africa predates the advent of colonialism in Africa. This history ranges from the Alexandria Museum and Library established in the third century B.C. in Egypt to the Christian monasteries that emerged in the fourth century A.D. in Ethiopia to the Islamic institutions of higher learning, some of which continue to exist today, such as Al-Azhar, which was founded in 969 in Cairo (Ajayi et al., 1996; Zeleza, 2006). The western model was, however, introduced during colonialism, starting with Fourah Bay College in Liberia in 1876. In the case of the British colonies in Africa, some efforts to establish universities started after the Second World War with the emergence of the Asquith Colleges, which refer to university colleges that were established in British Africa (e.g., Khartoum University in 1947 and Makerere University in 1949) and had a special relationship with the University of London, as well as other British universities.

Following closely the work of (Adelman, 1999; Samoff and Carrol, 2003), the first period covers theoretical views about the role of higher education in development dominant during the immediate post-independence period from the early 1960s to the late 1970s. The second period covers theoretical changes that took place between the early 1980s to the mid-1990s in line with the activities of the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) during the stabilisation and structural adjustment period of the 1980s.¹² The third period covers theoretical developments in the economic growth literature that became prominent during the mid-1990s and continues to influence policy formulation concerning the higher education sector at the present time.

Following this discussion on theoretical evolution, the chapter moves to an analysis of the empirical literature pertaining to the role of higher education in development. This section examines both the micro- and macro-level empirical evidence connecting higher education to positive development outcomes. Following closely the work of (Oketch et al., 2014), this section indicates that although the empirical literature is vast and fairly robust at the micro level, it is by no means conclusive at the macro level and thus a micro–macro paradox prevails. Potential explanatory factors behind this paradox are explored.

The final section of the chapter introduces the system of provision (SOP) approach as an alternative analytical framework for examining the higher education sector. This section aims to show that while human capital theory provides important insights into individual demands for education and the link between education and economic growth, this theory and the empirical studies it inspires only deal with a minor aspect of education (i.e., mostly the cost and returns of education) and leave other crucial elements of education—elements that cannot be converted into economic variables—outside the analysis.

¹² Both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were created at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. The IMF is an international financial institution tasked with the stability of the international monetary and financial systems. The World Bank is a development bank that was initially tasked with the rebuilding of post-war Europe. It has since expanded its mandate to global poverty alleviation, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and has been using its financial reach to establish itself as a knowledge bank—a source and provider of knowledge to further the global development agenda—an agenda that the World Bank itself plays a large role in defining.

In contrast, the SOP approach begins by considering education as a social and historical construct embedded in context-specific socio-economic structures and relations. Using SOP to examine how the higher education system in a particular context functions, and whether its functionality is conducive to positive development outcomes, allows the analysis to look beyond economic variables and bring into the investigation the influence of historical and prevailing social structures and relations.

3.2 Theoretical Evolution—Higher Education and Development

Before outlining the theoretical evolution of the role of higher education in development, three key general observations can be made. First, the significant changes in theoretical perspectives about the role of higher education in development that have taken place to a large extent reflect paradigm shifts that have occurred within the economics discipline as a whole, especially since the mid-1970s; notably, the waning of Keynesian economics and the subsequent rise of neoclassical economics (Milakonis and Fine, 2009; Snowden and Vane, 2005). The assessment of theoretical evolution within the education sector in general and higher education in particular cannot therefore be fully understood outside the broader context of theoretical evolution that has been taking place within the economics discipline.

Second and relatedly, these theoretical shifts do not implicate policy formulation within the higher education sector alone—concepts about how economic growth and development can be achieved and sustained, as well as the role of the state in the process of development are also implicated. In the context of SSA, these theoretical developments completely overhauled the development trajectory that most countries in the region embraced after independence, whereby the state played a central role in the planning and execution of social and economic development programmes.

Third, for the SSA region in particular, the formulation of social and economic policies has been exposed to the paradigmatic shifts taking place in the economics discipline, largely through the involvement of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the stabilisation and structural adjustment period of the 1980s. A critical understanding of the theoretical and policy evolution within the education sector in general and the higher education in particular therefore requires

consideration of the crucial role these institutions, especially the World Bank, have played in social and economic policy formulation in the region.

3.2.1 Higher education as a tool for Africanisation and modernisation (early 1960s to late 1970s)

When they become independent, just as sure as the national anthem, the national flag, and the national currency, a national university too become an obligatory sign of real independence (Mamdani, 2008, p. 5).

In their updated statistics of educational attainment covering the period from 1950 to 2010, Barro and Lee show that in 1960, when most countries in the region were securing independence, only 0.2 percent of the population in SSA aged fifteen years old and above had completed tertiary education (Barro and Lee, 2010, p. 32).¹³ For countries between the Sahara and the Kalahari deserts (middle Africa), this figure was likely to have been much lower since most countries in this region did not have any institution of higher education before independence (Mamdani, 2008, p. 5).¹⁴ For the SSA region as a whole, although there were few ‘regional’ universities designed to serve more than one country, the development of higher education in earnest took place after independence (ibid.).

The immediate post-independence period therefore saw a rush to establish national universities. Establishing national universities, often just one, became one of the symbols of sovereignty akin to a national anthem, currency, and flag (Mamdani, 2008, p. 5). But there was also a practical side to establishing universities. Countries in the region faced serious shortages of qualified human resources not only to staff their expanding social and economic institutions, but also to fill positions that were being vacated by colonial administrators. At independence, Zambia, for instance, had

¹³ The Barro and Lee latest dataset includes estimated data for 33 countries in the SSA region.

¹⁴ Mamdani (2008) argues that countries colonised by the British in the 20th century experienced a very different form of colonisation. In contrast to the earlier phase of British Imperialism prior to the 20th century, when colonisation was justified within the civilisation agenda, the higher education sector played a key part within this agenda. However, two uprisings that took place in the middle of the 19th century (the Indian uprising and the Morant Bay uprising in Jamaica) completely changed the trajectory of the colonial agenda. From this period, colonisation took a form of indirect rule, whereby the empire was particularly suspicious of the educated cadre. The empire should, as noted by Lord Lugard in his *Dual Mandate* in 1922, avoid the ‘Indian disease’ in Africa—that is, the susceptibility of the educated cadre to nationalist demands. As a consequence, the development of higher education for countries colonised during the period of indirect rule, which are the bulk of the countries in the middle of Africa between the Sahara and Kalahari deserts, was largely a post-independence phenomenon.

100 university graduates in its entire population (Teferra and Altbach, 2004, p. 24). The paucity of educated human resources was particularly severe in science and technical fields, which were crucial for the development of these new nations. For instance, when the Democratic Republic of the Congo (first known as the Republic of the Congo and, from 1971–1994, as Zaire) received independence in 1960, the country did not have a single indigenous engineer, doctor, or lawyer (*ibid.*).

It is important to note here that the colonial education infrastructure was fairly limited across the board and not just at the higher education level. As a consequence, at independence, a large part of the population across the region was illiterate and many children did not have access to primary school. For instance, during the period between 1949–1950, total primary gross enrolment rates in Tanzania (then Tanganyika) and Nigeria were a mere 10 and 16 percent, respectively (Sender, 1999, p. 93). These levels were also much lower when disaggregated by gender. In 1950, less than 10 percent of adult women in Africa were literate (Johnston, 2011, p. 4). In the immediate post-independence period, widening access to education at the lower levels was therefore a priority and countries such as Ghana, Tanzania, and Kenya, for instance, introduced free primary education; in 1961 for Ghana and in 1974 for Tanzania and Kenya (WB, 2009a, pp. 1–2).

In addition to its mandate to address the lack of educated human resources, the higher education sector was also tasked with the Africanisation of posts within these institutions. At the time of independence, less than one-quarter of all professional civil service posts across the region were held by nationals and most trade and industries were foreign owned (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). It is plausible to hypothesise here that the indigenisation of civil service posts during the early post-independence era also might have had an important political economy angle—having nationals staff key social and economic infrastructure highlighted political sovereignty and portrayed local ownership of the development process.

Given these prevailing human resource needs, the dominant theoretical tool utilised by many countries in the region during this time was ‘manpower planning’ as it was then generally referred to (Samoff and Carrol, 2003), a development strategy that aims to align the activities of education institutions with the human resource

projections from planned development activities (Harbison and Myers, 1964).¹⁵ According to manpower planning, each university graduate is, in theory, guaranteed a position upon the completion of his or her studies. Although this was also the case in practice during the early post-independence era owing to the scarcity of qualified human resources, this became unsustainable, especially during the 1970s (see discussion below).

While manpower forecasting was also a popular strategy followed by a number of countries outside SSA, especially in countries in East Asia with some success (George, 2006; Jeong, 2000; Tilak, 2002), implementing this strategy in SSA was challenging. Accurate manpower planning depends on the ability to correctly forecast labour market trends—a process that demands real time data that were not always available (Blaug, 1985; Debeauvais and Psacharopoulos, 1985). Further, as time passed and the shortage of qualified human resources continued to be met, manpower planning became a less useful tool. In the case of Tanzania (then Tanganyika), for example, manpower planning became increasingly difficult once its original mandate to fill positions vacated by colonial administrators was achieved (van de Laar, 1967, p. 2).

In addition to the provision of qualified human resources, universities in the early post-independence period were also tasked with the broader development needs of the new states. Since development at this time was understood within the wider scope of modernisation, the idea that social and economic development is achieved when societies move from traditional to modern societies—in effect, following the path of the then industrialised countries (Lushaba, 2009; Teye, 1993, pp. 30–31)—the university was also tasked with the production of skilled manpower to further the modernisation agenda.

To a large extent, the view of development as modernisation reflects thinking within orthodox classical development economics during the post-Second World War

¹⁵ Manpower strategy is concerned with both the supply and demand side of the labour market. On the demand side, the strategy focused on employment creation and, in particular, on economic growth trajectories that were conducive to employment generation. The supply side aimed to match the projected employment statistics with the skills that needed to be produced by the education institutions.

period in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶ During this time, economic growth was also viewed within the traditional-modern duality as a process involving the systematic reallocation of factors of production from the low productivity traditional sector (mostly agrarian) with decreasing returns to the high productivity modern industrial sector with increasing returns (Kuznet, 1955; Lewis, 1954).

Since the process of structural transformation was believed to be riddled with rigidities, externalities, and coordination failures, the state was deemed a necessary prime mover to guide society through the process (Adelman, 1999).¹⁷ The centrality of the state to the development process also reflects the dominance of Keynesian economics within the wider economics discipline during the post-Second World War period, in particular the proposition that governments can play an important role in managing aggregate demand via fiscal policies (Snowdon and Vane, 2005, pp. 13–21).

The development trajectory followed by newly independent SSA countries largely reflects the prevailing orthodox ideas about the process of development noted above. The newly independent states played central roles both in the planning and execution of development projects and were, in effect, ‘developmental states’.¹⁸ Since the higher education sector was enshrined in the development agenda, national universities across SSA also become ‘developmental universities’ (Ajayi et al., 1996; Mkude et al., 2003; Yesufu, 1973).

Consequently, governments in the region played central roles in how the sector functioned. In Tanzania, for example, the head of state was the titular head of the national university (Mkude et al., 2003). Although the heavy involvement of the state in the functioning of the higher education sector meant that universities received high priority in domestic policies (e.g., the case of Tanzania in Mkude et al., 2003), this also meant that governments treated national universities as parastatals and threatened

¹⁶ This thinking is well captured by W.W. Rostow (1956) in his *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Rostow outlines the framework for modernisation, or perhaps more accurately, the social, political, and cultural transformational prerequisites needed for countries to achieve modernisation and thus development.

¹⁷ See, for example, the works of post-Second World War classical economists such as Arthur Lewis, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, Albert Hirschman, and Ragnar Nurske.

¹⁸ For an extensive definition of ‘developmental state’, including the origin of the term, see (UNCTAD, 2007, pp. 57–87).

the academic autonomy of institutions (Mamdani, 2011; Mkandawire, 2011, pp. 14–15; Zeleza, 2003, pp. 155–156).

Moreover, since universities depended almost entirely on the state for their finances, they also lacked the autonomy to question prevailing political trajectories, such as the one-party rule that characterised the majority of countries at this time (Mkandawire, 2011). Mamdani (2008, p. 6) argues that a contradiction existed in the relationship between the state and the higher education sector—although the sector was a result of nationalist efforts, that very same nationalist power worked to stifle critical thought within institutions of higher education.

Notwithstanding issues of autonomy, universities also faced a number of other challenges during this time. First, within a decade of independence, the original mandate of universities to provide educated human resources became ambiguous as the number of graduates produced by higher education institutions were reported to exceed the number of jobs being created across the region, though shortages of manpower in specific fields were also noted (WB, 1971). Although this structural imbalance is attributed not just to poor education policy but also to unsuitable development strategies (WB, 1974, p. 3), national universities nonetheless faced a period of identity crisis and needed to define their new mandate within a rapidly changing post-independence socio-economic environment. For university graduates, the guarantee for ‘a government job, a car loan and a bungalow upon graduation’ (Mamdani, 1993, p. 9), which was the norm in the early 1960s, also became unattainable in the 1970s.

Second and relatedly, once the focus shifted from the production of an educated workforce, national universities also had to grapple with questions about their relevance, in particular the extent to which these universities addressed the needs of local communities. Given the fact that national universities (both those that were established prior to and after independence) were modelled according to former colonial universities, questions about the relevance of curricula also emerged.

A number of initiatives took place during the early 1970s to address the issue of relevance. In a workshop organised by the Association of African Universities in Accra, Ghana in 1972, for instance, questions about what the new African university

of the 1970s should be like, what philosophy it should follow, and what role it should play, dominated discussions (Ajayi et al., 1996). In the report from the proceedings, T.M. Yesufu, the editor of the report, argues that ‘the truly African university must be one that draws its inspiration from its environment, not a transplanted tree, but of growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in the African soil’ (Yesufu, 1973, p. 40).

Philosophical questions about the role and relevance of the prevailing model of education across all levels, not just in higher education, were also emerging. For example, in the late 1960s, Julius K. Nyerere, the then president of Tanzania, developed the concept of education for self-reliance in an effort to ground the education system in the reality of life in Tanzania (which was largely rural and agrarian based), as well as to inculcate the socialist ideology that was elaborated in the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (Nyerere, 1968).¹⁹

At the higher education level in particular, the Musoma Resolution of the early 1970s challenged the curricula of the national university and its relevance to the needs of people of Tanzania (Mkude et al., 2003). As a consequence of this process, the national university there established a compulsory course for first and second year students—development studies—that aimed to ‘historicise the question of economic poverty and social backwardness as ‘under-development’, that is the outcome of modern colonialism rather a pre-colonial legacy’ (Mamdani, 2008, p. 5). Additionally, a range of research centres were established with a specific focus on local issues, such as the study of the Kiswahili language (Mkude et al., 2003, pp. 2–3).

While examples of efforts made across the region to ground the national universities in local realities are prevalent, the extent of their impact at the time is ambiguous, especially since the language of instruction remained that of former colonial administrators. The excerpt below captures the dilemma that national universities faced in the effort to ground their activities in local settings.

The new post-independence African university was triumphantly universalistic and uncompromisingly foreign. We made no

¹⁹ In this concept, there is a change in perspective from education being largely considered within its role in the production of a skilled labour force to advance the social and economic agendas of newly independent states to education being used as an instrument for radical social change (Samoff and Sumra, 1994).

concession to local culture. None! We stood as custodians of standards in outposts of civilisation. Unlike our counterparts in Asia and Latin America, we did not even speak the cultural languages of the people. The language of the university was English, French or Portuguese. As in the affairs of the state, the discourse of universities also took place in a language that the vast majority of working people could not even understand. There was a linguistic curtain that shut the people out (Mamdani, 1993, p. 11).

It is important to note here that while universities were embroiled with manpower strategies during the early post-independence period and later in efforts to ground themselves in the realities of their local settings, issues of postgraduate training did not feature in their priorities. Mamdani (2011) recalls that at both the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Makerere University in Uganda, the prevailing assumption was that postgraduate training was to be done abroad via staff development programmes. The neglect of postgraduate training had a negative impact on the long-term sustainability of the curricula developments taking place at this time, as well as on the building of research infrastructure and capacity, that depend in crucial ways on postgraduate training.

As national universities were struggling to establish themselves during the first two decades of independence, governments across the region were also engaged in efforts to modernise social and economic infrastructures. However, the structural transformation of the economy that was required to achieve modernisation—the reallocation of factors of production from the traditional to the modern industrial sector—was minimal during the first two decades of post-independence (UNCTAD, 2002, p. 37). Dependence on the export of a primary commodity, a colonial legacy, continued to characterise the structure of most economies in the region. Although economic growth was achieved during this time—in SSA, GDP per capita as a whole grew from USD 416 in 1960 to USD 577 in 1977 (Stiglitz et al., 2013)—this growth was largely driven by favourable external conditions and was thus highly predisposed to changes in the external environment (Deaton, 1999; Deaton and Miller, 1995).

The beginning of the downturn in global economies, the coming to an end of the golden age (the boom in economic growth experienced by developed industrial economies from the end of the Second World War to the early 1970s), and the subsequent decline in demand for primary commodities from SSA, marked the

beginning of economic collapses in the region. The oil shock of the late 1970s further implicated terms of trade for non-oil producing countries in the region and led to severe balance of payment deficits. Servicing external debt, which grew from 18 percent of GDP in 1970 to 40 percent in 1980, further deteriorated fiscal and current account imbalances (Akyuz and Gore, 2001, p. 272).²⁰ Consequently, by the early 1980s, most economies in the region were in crisis and turned to the IMF and the World Bank for bailout packages.

3.2.2 Higher education as an ‘expensive luxury’ (1980s to mid-1990s)

The collapse of the post-war golden age boom also led to significant changes in the economics discipline as a whole. The simultaneous rise in both inflation and unemployment in developed countries from the early 1970s, a scenario referred to as ‘stagflation’, discredited the dominant Keynesianism and prepared the way for a paradigmatic shift within the discipline. The subsequent emergence of monetarist counter-revolution (new classical economics), with its core proposition that state involvement in the economy is ineffective and could also be a source of inefficiency (Milakonis and Fine, 2009; Snowden and Vane, 2005, p. 23), led to theoretical shifts not only in concepts about how economic and social development is achieved, but also in the role of government in the development process.²¹

For development economics, this period marks a watershed between the earlier form of development economics with its ideas about modernisation, structural transformation, and the state at the analytical centre to the newer form of development economics that ‘emphasised the virtues of the market and the vices of the state’ in economic development (Fine, 2011, p. 7).²² Furthermore, this period also marks an assimilation of the study of development into the broader economics discipline. Although the two had occupied parallel universes hitherto, the new form of

²⁰ It is worth noting here that neoliberal proponents of trade as an engine for growth, such as Krueger (1998), argued that the economic collapses experienced by countries in SSA during this time was a result of the failure of the import substitution regime that many countries utilised during the 1960s and 1970s.

²¹ The monetarism counter-revolution is associated with the work of Milton Friedman, who argued in the *Role of Monetary Policy* in 1968 that in contrast to Keynes’ propositions, the long-term trade-off between inflation and unemployment did not exist. The work of Robert E. Lucas is also often associated with earlier challenges (in the 1970s) to Keynesianism with regard to the effectiveness of the state in managing aggregate demand.

²² In conjunction with the emergence of rent-seeking arguments, all failures in the economy were viewed as caused by the failure of the state and not necessarily the failure of market systems.

development economics became synonymous with the wider economics discipline (Fine, 2011, p. 7; Kanbur, 2002).²³

The above paradigmatic changes, in particular the ascendancy of the neoclassical economics school of thought, began to influence social and economic policy formulation in the SSA region with the arrival of the IMF and the World Bank in the early 1980s to bail out collapsing economies.²⁴ Using policy-based lending—a type of lending that attaches specific policy reforms as conditions to loans—the IMF and the World Bank promoted outward-oriented policies designed to minimise the role of the state in the economy in favour of markets.

The set of policy instruments promoted by the IMF and World Bank through the stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes are collectively referred to as the ‘Washington Consensus’, a term coined by John Williamson (1990) to describe the convergence of views towards market and outward-oriented policies. According to the Washington Consensus, economic growth requires the liberalisation of trade, macroeconomic stability, and getting prices right (Stiglitz, 1998). The core idea of the consensus is that if these key fundamentals are correct, then the state has no further role in the economy—markets will effectively and efficiently allocate resources and generate economic growth (Stiglitz, 1998).

It is worth noting here that in contrast to ideas about the process of development as structural transformation in the pre-Washington Consensus era, where it is accepted that coordination failures existed and government has a role to play in correcting these failure, in the Washington Consensus the state itself is a source of failure (in particular, the association of the state with rent seeking activities; for example, see (Krueger, 1974). Furthermore, ideas about development being as much an economic process as a political one do not feature in the Washington Consensus (Stiglitz, 1998). Formulating economic policies also no longer requires an in-depth

²³ Ravi Kanbur argues, ‘Development economics today is economics applied to poor countries’ (Kanbur, 2002, p. 77). Anne Krueger, the chief economist at the World Bank from 1982 to 1986 also notes that ‘once it is recognised that individuals respond to incentives, and that market failure is the result of inappropriate incentives rather than non-responsiveness, the “separateness” of development economics as a field largely disappears’ (Krueger, 1986, p. 203).

²⁴ The IMF, using fiscal and monetary policies, focused its attention on the stabilisation of balance of payments and thus worked on the demand side of the economy (Khan et al., 1991). The World Bank focused on the structural adjustment of the economy and thus worked on supply side issues, such as the adjustment of wages, prices, and market liberalisation.

understanding of a context and its history: all an economist needs is a few days to look at some economic indicators (such as inflation, money supply growth, interest rates, budget, and trade deficits) to come up with policy recommendations for economic growth (ibid.).

Through conditions attached to loans, the IMF and the World Bank infused Washington Consensus ideologies into social and economic policy formulation in the region. It is argued that during this period national governments lost policy space to set their own social and economic priorities (Oya and Pons-Vignon, 2010; Samoff and Sumra, 1994).²⁵ For the education sector in particular, although the removal of the state from the sector was not fully promoted (Rose, 2006), education priorities in the region were nonetheless influenced by the priorities of these international agencies (Samoff, 1999, 1993; Samoff and Sumra, 1994).

During this period, the World Bank became an important player in setting education priorities across the region (Fine and Rose, 2001; Rose, 2006). The involvement of the World Bank in the education sector, however, predates the structural adjustment period of the 1980s. From the early 1960s, the World Bank started to provide loans to educational projects not only in Africa, but also in other countries across the world (WB, 1963).²⁶

The entrance of the World Bank in the education sector in the early 1960s, a sector that only a few years earlier it had considered to be non-economic—neither revenue generating nor capital-intensive (Kapur et al., 1997; Rose, 2006), was facilitated and justified by theoretical developments in the economic growth literature

²⁵ It would be too simplistic to assume that governments in the region accepted or implemented all policy reforms attached to loans. The relationship between the IMF and the World Bank and national governments was a contested one. As a result, the World Bank later used classifications such as ‘good’ or ‘poor’ reformers to analyse why reforms had not, in the case of poor reformers, produced the expected results.

²⁶ In 1963, in the World Bank President’s Memorandum, the bank president sets out plans for lending to the education sector. In this memorandum, the World Bank emphasises that it would only finance education projects that have positive impact on economic development.

of the time, particularly the formalisation of the human capital theory (Fine and Rose, 2001; Rose, 2006; Samoff and Carrol, 2003).²⁷

3.2.2.1 *Human Capital Theory*

Human capital theory, as formalised by Schultz (1961, 1960) and Becker (1964, 1962), changed the perception of education from being a consumption item to an investment item that yielded economic returns.²⁸ According to human capital theory, people deliberately acquire education (skills and knowledge), and since this education becomes part of the individual receiving it, it can be considered a form of capital, a human capital (Schultz, 1960).

Education is thus a form of investment, akin to physical investments, that individuals make today not for the sake of immediate enjoyment, but rather for positive monetary and non-monetary returns in the future (Blaug, 1976). Although education is often considered the main component of human capital, other activities that individuals deliberately pursue for the sake of future benefits, such as improving health, spending time searching for information about better employment outcomes, or migration, are all considered actions that augment the human capital endowments of individuals (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1961).

Similar to investing in other forms of investments, according to human capital theory, decisions to pursue education are dependent on the outcome of a cost-benefit analysis. Individuals consider the total costs associated with education, including the opportunity costs (i.e., the loss of leisure time or forgone income while studying) and the expected benefits, mostly in terms of the present value of discounted future earnings. If the outcome of this analysis is favourable, then individuals would, *ceteris paribus*, choose to pursue education. Here, state subsidies, for instance, could be used to alter the outcome of the cost-benefit equation and thus influence decisions to pursue specific levels of education.

²⁷ Heyneman points out that although human capital facilitated the World Bank's entrance into the education sector, this was motivated by the 'engineering problem' it faced; that is, the lack of human resources needed to support its investment in infrastructure projects in developing countries (Heyneman, 2003, pp. 316–317).

²⁸ The concept of human capital or, put simply, the importance of labour characteristics to the production process, predates the work of Schultz and Becker in the 1960s and goes as far back as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Irving Fisher, and others. However, as Blaug points out, the concept was never tied together as a theory prior to Schultz and Becker (Blaug, 1976, p. 827).

According to human capital theory, investing in education has direct and positive implications for both the individuals investing in it and the wider society. At the individual level, the central proposition is that education increases the productive capacity of individual workers, and since workers are paid according to their productivity levels, educated workers are expected to earn more than other workers. An increase in real earnings is therefore attributed to human capital endowments (Schultz, 1961, p. 1). This relationship was formalised by Jacob (Mincer, 1974) through Mincerian earning functions, a model that explains individual earnings as a function of the level of schooling and labour market experience.

Investing in education also has a direct impact on the wider economy through output growth. Since human capital endowment increases the quality of human effort (Schultz, 1961, p. 1), educated workers are also responsible for increasing the productive capacity of the overall economy (Schultz, 1961, p. 1). In his presidential address to the American Economic Association in 1960, Theodore Schultz analyses the US economy during the post-war period and points out that output had grown faster than the contribution of each of the traditional factors of production (land, labour hours, and physical capital). He argues that human capital is probably vital in explaining ‘residual’ growth, which is the growth that cannot be explained by changes in the traditional input factors.²⁹ Schultz’s argument contrasts with the dominant view at the time that physical capital accumulation was key to economic growth, as is posited by the Harrod–Domar growth model.³⁰

In addition to providing the economic justification that the World Bank needed to fund educational projects, the formalisation of human capital theory also led to the emergence of the field of the economics of education (Blaug, 1985). Although human capital as a theory is not particularly concerned about the whole process of education and only focuses on the economic costs and returns to education (discussed further

²⁹ According to the Solow (1957) growth accounting procedure, aggregate output is explained by the stock of capital (K), labour force (L), and total factor productivity, or TFP (A) [$Y_t = A_t F(K_t, L_t)$]. TFP captures the efficiency by which capital and labour are utilised. The contribution of TFP to aggregate growth is considered a ‘residual’ that is the component of growth that cannot be explained by capital or labour force hours.

³⁰ According to the Harrod–Domar growth model (developed by Harrod in 1939, 1948 and by Domar in 1946, 1947), economic growth is proportional to the share of investment spending in the economy. For an economy to grow, net addition to capital stock (e.g., machinery) is required (Snowdon and Vane, 2005, pp. 598–601).

below), the theory and the field it inspired grew rapidly. By the 1970s, the study of education became synonymous with economics of education. Blaug points out that at this time ‘no self-respecting Minister of Education would have dreamed of making educational decisions without an economist sitting at his right hand’ (Blaug, 1985, p. 17). Owing to influential empirical studies, in particular the rate of return to education (discussed below), the economics of education as a field became increasingly influential in the formulation of education policy in the region, especially after its adoption by the World Bank during the structural adjustment period. This is where the discussion now turns.

3.2.2.2 *The World Bank and education policy in SSA*

A condition for qualifying for World Bank assistance in the education sector was for African countries to divert resources from higher education and channel them instead towards primary and basic education. [...] African Governments protested that in the matter of providing education to their people, it was not a question of either primary or secondary, or indeed higher education... Needless to say, with the tremendous pressures that come along with World Bank and IMF conditionalities, they lost the battle, and higher education in Africa virtually went under. To this day, many countries have not been able to recover from that onslaught on African higher education. Some of our finest institutions have thus almost been destroyed, thanks to the imposition of bad policies from partners who, in the first place, came out professing to help us. What we received from them was the kiss of death! Statement by Hon Mrs Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, Secretary of State for Education of the Republic of The Gambia, cited by (Samoff and Carrol, 2003, p. 1).

The above quote captures the essence of the literature on the relationship between the World Bank and the higher education sector in the region during the structural adjustment period in the 1980s. As noted earlier, however, the relationship between the World Bank and the education sector in Africa dates back to the early 1960s, in line with the formalisation of human capital theory.

Informed by human capital theory, from the early 1970s the World Bank started to comment on the state of education in developing countries, including in Africa. In its first education sector working paper in 1971, the World Bank highlights the crisis

in the education sector in developing countries, listing three major problems facing the sector: poor quality, a mismatch between education and the labour markets, and financial constraints (WB, 1971, pp. 7–12).

Although in this document the World Bank does not necessarily specify its position on the higher education sector in the context of SSA, it highlights the shortcomings associated with the manpower-planning model that most countries in the region had been pursuing since independence. The World Bank notes that since public sector wages in the region were set too high (higher than the market clearing wage), the high demand for education required for these posts did not reflect prevailing manpower needs but rather was fuelled by high wages. The World Bank suggests that the higher education sector in the region was producing more graduates than the public sector could absorb; the public sector was the biggest employer of graduates at this time.³¹

By its second education sector paper in 1974, the change in the World Bank's perspective on higher education is evident. Although the World Bank continued to reflect on the crisis facing the sector in developing countries, and states that the sector is 'ill-conceived and not adapted to the development needs of these countries' (WB, 1974, p. i), issues of poverty (especially rural poverty) and the role of education in reducing poverty feature prominently in the report.

The 1974 report also raises issues of equity in the education system in developing countries and argues that the bulk of education expenditure was being spent on training a small elite to work in the modern sector of the economy, while 60 to 80 percent of the population was being neglected (*ibid.*, p. 3). The report continues that more than 50 percent of the education budget was spent on secondary and higher education, which accounted for less than 20 percent of all student enrolment (*ibid.*). This report lays the ground for a shift in emphasis away from higher education to basic education, a policy recommendation that became prominent during the structural adjustment period of the 1980s (Samoff and Carrol, 2003).

³¹ Before the structural adjustment period in the 1980s, modern sector employment was concentrated in the public sector. For example, in Guinea, 75 percent of formal employment in 1984 was found in the public sector (UNCTAD, 2007, p. 48).

A similar tone continues in the third education sector report published by the World Bank in 1980. Here, the World Bank argues that investment in higher education had been ‘too rapid and at the expense of some other needs of societies’ (WB, 1980, p. 8). In addition, the mismatch between the skills required in labour markets and the skills possessed by graduates—graduates that the World Bank argues were highly educated, but inadequately prepared for the available jobs (Samoff and Carrol, 2003)—also features in the report. Although not as explicitly as in the previous report, in the 1980 report the World Bank recommends a reallocation of resources to the elementary level of education, where per unit costs were considerably lower and equity implications higher.

Four key observations can be made from the first three reports on the education sector that the World Bank released from 1971 to 1980 (before the structural adjustment period). First, the World Bank’s view on the education sector in Africa from the beginning had been about fixing a sector that it considered to have been in crisis. Based on internal and external efficiency, analytical measures that the World Bank itself had constructed (Samoff and Carrol, 2003), the education sector in the region was perceived to be failing and governments were encouraged to adopt a set of recommendations provided by the World Bank. Here, it is evident that the World Bank was beginning to carve out its role as the expert on the education sector. At the time it released the first education sector working paper in 1971, however, the World Bank had only been involved in the sector for less than a decade.

Second, although governments were not instructed to adopt recommendations provided by the World Bank on how to fix the failing education sector, it nevertheless played part in shaping educational priorities in the region during this period. Samoff and Carrol (2003) point out that due to the growing influence of the World Bank, governments adopted recommendations simply because they wanted to meet the World Bank’s expectations and take part in its sponsored discussions. Furthermore, even though the World Bank had only entered the sector in the early 1960s (it issued its first education sector loan to Tunisia in 1963), it quickly built its lending portfolio in the education sector. By 1979, for example, it had approved 192 projects in eighty one countries around the world (WB, 1980, p. 79). Inevitably, as its lending portfolio

grew, the World Bank's influence and its perceived expertise in the education sector also grew.

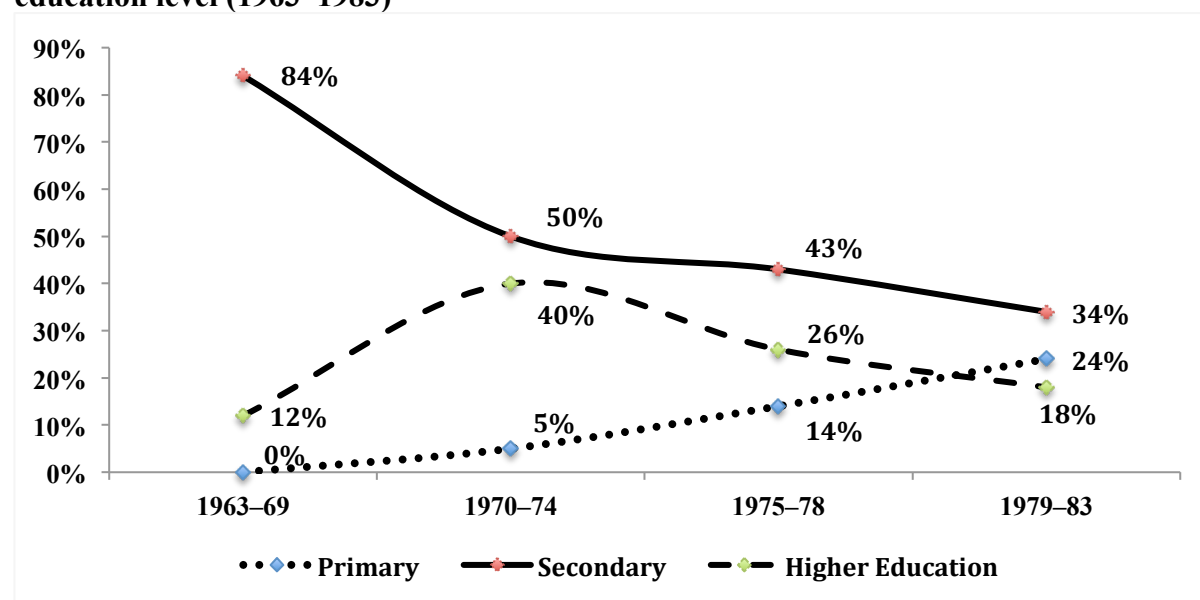
Third and relatedly, apart from policy recommendations, the World Bank also influenced (albeit indirectly at this time) how the education sector was evaluated. In its early reports, the World Bank not only emphasises terms such as the 'efficiency' and 'productivity' of the sector, but also introduces narrow (quantitative) technical tools to measure these components. For example, drop out and repeater rates and graduate employment outcomes became measures of efficiency for the education system in its entirety. Samoff and Carrol (2003, p.17), argue that this approach is not only deductive and ignores other roles that the education sector plays in the society, but it also shifts the understanding of the education from being a *process* to being an *outcome*.

It is important to note here that the use of mathematical tools in the assessment of the education sector by the World Bank to a large extent reflects the prevailing priority given to mathematical tools within mainstream neoclassical economics. While the promotion of the use of mathematics in economics peaked in the 1950s during the formalist revolution, its roots date back to the marginalist revolution of the 1870s (Milakonis and Fine, 2009). In the history of the economics discipline, the marginalist revolution marked a significant methodological shift—from (classical) political economy, with its inductive approaches to economic enquiry, to (neoclassical) economics, with its emphasis on purer forms of economics and consequently on technical tools in the analysis of economic phenomena (Milakonis and Fine, 2009, pp. 96–98).

Fourth, from its entrance in the sector in 1963 until the mid-1970s, the World Bank directed the largest proportion of its education sector lending to the secondary level, followed by the higher education sector. Support to primary education during the early 1960s was negligible. Citing Jones (1992, p.99), Rose (2006) points out that the aversion to supporting primary education during this time was based on the 'bizarre rationale' that unlimited demand for this level of education would overwhelm available finances.

However, under the presidency of Robert S. McNamara in the 1970s, the World Bank expanded its focus to include wider development concerns, such as poverty (especially rural poverty) and issues of inequality—in effect, the World Bank expanded its identity to become a development agency (Kapur et al., 1997; Rose, 2006).³² From this period, concerns about inequality in education access and the role of education in alleviating poverty came to the fore. Consequently, the World Bank started to emphasise basic education. However, the shift in lending strategy, as Figure 3.1 shows, was not drastic. Over time, the World Bank gradually increased its lending to primary education and reduced its funding to secondary and higher education.

Figure 3.1: The proportion of World Bank/IDA education sector lending per education level (1963–1983)



Source: Graph created by author using data from the 1980 World Bank *Education Sector Working Paper*. These figures represent all loans the World Bank made to the education sector, mostly in developing countries. Figures for 1979–1983 were forecasts. Figures for each period do not add to 100 percent because this graph does not include the proportion directed to the non-formal segment of the education sector.

If the World Bank influenced the education sector indirectly in the 1970s, this changed during the structural adjustment programme of the 1980s, whereby it became a prominent player in the sector (Brock-Utne, 2003; Fine and Rose, 2001; Mamdani, 1993; Rose, 2006; Samoff and Carrol, 2003). In contrast to the earlier period, with its

³² From its establishment in 1944, the World Bank had been known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and therefore to some extent development has been part the World Bank. However, prior to the mid-1970s, it had largely been focused on economic projects (e.g., lending to infrastructure projects) and not issues of poverty.

structural adjustment loans during the 1980s, the World Bank possessed the power to impose policy reforms as part of loan conditionalities.

With the publication of the 1980 *World Development Report*, the World Bank's emphasis on poverty continued. This focus inevitably had an influence on its education policy during the structural adjustment period. One defining feature of the World Bank's education policy in the region during this time is its continual promotion of primary education,³³ a policy justified by the findings from the human capital empirics, the rate of return to education calculations.³⁴

3.2.2.2.1 *The Rate of Return to Education*

The rate of return to education (RORE) studies can be argued to have been singly responsible for the greatest shift in policy perspective against the higher education sector in the region. From the early 1970s, George Psacharopoulos published comprehensive reviews of RORE for developed and developing countries (Psacharopoulos, 1994, 1980, 1973; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002).³⁵ At their core, RORE calculations are basically cost-benefit analyses of education calculated at the individual and social level for different levels of education (primary, secondary, and higher level of education) and aggregated at regional level.³⁶

For the SSA region, two principal RORE patterns are responsible for policy shifts during the structural adjustment period. First, RORE calculations conclude that both private and social returns to primary education are higher than any other level of

³³ It is important to note here that some stabilisation and structural adjustment policies that were promoted by the IMF and the World Bank had led to negative welfare outcomes for the poor; see, for example, the argument put forward by Cornia, Jolly, and Steward (1987) in their *Adjustment with a Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth*. The promotion of primary education by the World Bank during the structural adjustment period that culminated in the universal primary education (UPE) agenda in 1990 can therefore be seen as a way for the World Bank to present itself as being pro-poor (Rose, 2006, p. 171).

³⁴ Although human capital theory had provided the economic justification the World Bank needed to finance the education sector (Rose, 2006), it only used this theory to justify the prioritisation of human over physical investment and had continued to use manpower planning to inform its lending programmes prior to the 1980s (Heyneman, 2003). This changed in the 1980s when the empirics of human capital theory, the rate of return to education, started to be used as basis for the World Bank's education sector policies.

³⁵ George Psacharopoulos was employed by the World Bank to head the Education Research Unit that was established in 1981.

³⁶ Methodologically, RORE calculations use the Mincer earning function. In these equations, earnings is a dependent variable and years of schooling and years of labour market experience are independent variables (see, for example, Psacharopoulos, 1994).

education. In his 1994 report, Psacharopoulos reports that social returns to primary, secondary, and higher education in SSA are 24.3 percent, 18.2 percent, and 11.2 percent, respectively. Additionally, private returns to primary, secondary, and higher education at this time are 41.3 percent, 26.6 percent, and 27.8 percent, respectively (Psacharopoulos, 1994, p. 1328). Second, private returns at the higher level of education are reported to have been much higher compared to the corresponding social returns at this level of education. In the 1994 report, for example, private returns to higher education are 27.8 percent compared to only 11.2 percent in social returns (ibid.).³⁷ Based on these patterns, Psacharopoulos concludes that ‘primary education continues to exhibit the highest social profitability in the world regions’ (Bennell, 1996a, p. 183).

Although widely popular and credited for expanding the field of the economics of education (Blaug, 1985), RORE calculations and the underlying patterns presented above have been subject to heavy criticism, especially during the 1990s. In a series of publications, Paul Bennell, points out a number of serious theoretical and methodological shortcomings found in RORE studies that cast doubts on the accuracy of the findings. The following methodological and theoretical limitations of RORE studies identified by Bennell (2002, 1996a, 1996b) are pertinent for this study.

First, (Bennell, 1996a, 1996b) argues that RORE estimates for SSA are derived from an aggregation of a handful individual country studies that are not representative of the entire region. For instance, in the 1994 study (Psacharopoulos, 1994), only eighteen out of the then forty-six SSA countries are included in the RORE estimations. Further, of these eighteen, only eleven contain both private and social returns to education. The lack of adequate data from a representative sample of countries in SSA suggests that the generalisation of RORE findings across the region as a whole is highly problematic.

Second, in addition to inadequate country coverage, the majority of individual country studies used in the SSA RORE estimations are beset with data quality issues.

³⁷ These patterns are reported to have been consistent throughout the numerous reviews produced by Psacharopoulos and colleagues during the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2002. However, a background paper for the *World Development Report 2013*, ‘Returns to Schooling Around the World’, written by Patrinos and Montenegro (Mongenegro and Patrinos, 2013), finds that returns are highest at the higher level of education.

Bennell (1996a, 1996b) argues that many of the individual country studies used in the 1994 RORE estimates are of poor quality. In some studies, key variables (such as income data) used in their calculations are not derived from formal surveys, but rather are guesstimates made by the authors. Although crucial data limitations exist in the individual SSA country studies, Bennell (1996a) notes that once these studies are aggregated to arrive to the SSA-wide estimates, these issues are obscured and the potential margins of error are not clearly outlined in the final findings.

Third, perhaps even more crucial are the labour market assumptions embedded in the RORE calculations. As noted above, RORE calculations are largely cost-benefit analyses, where the cost and benefit of different levels of education to the individual and society as a whole are compared. One of the key variables to assess the benefit of education that is used in this calculation is earnings data. Almost all RORE studies in SSA use earnings data from wage employment in the formal sector to derive the net income benefit of different levels of education.

The focus on formal wage employment highlights one of the most crucial methodological limitations of the RORE calculations. The formal wage employment sector employs a very small proportion of people in SSA, especially since public sector employment has been declining since the 1980s. Excluding income from rural and informal employment, which where the majority of people are employed, means RORE estimations in SSA fail to capture the true net benefit of the different levels of education. This is particularly the case for primary education: the majority of these graduates is found in informal and subsistence agricultural employment (Bennell, 2002, 1996a, 1996b). The implication here is that the private and social RORE calculations for primary education are overestimated.

Incorrect RORE estimates can have significant implications for policy formulation. In particular, this can impact the demand for primary education by households. The perception that private and social RORE calculations for primary school are higher than other levels of education suggests households do not need further incentives to send their children to primary school. However, as noted above, the private and social RORE estimates are derived from inapplicable labour market assumptions, which overestimate returns to primary education. If the likelihood of securing formal sector employment for primary school leavers in SSA is low and

opportunities for further education are limited, then households may not have sufficient incentive to invest in educating their children, making the possibility of attaining global primary school enrolment targets (discussed below) a challenge (Bennell, 2002)(Thin, 2006).

Fourth and relatedly, in addition to the exclusion of informal and rural earnings, the reliance on formal wage sector earnings means that the earnings data used in RORE calculations for SSA are largely collected from the declining population of public sector employees, given the small private sector, where wages are not only determined by economic means, but also by administrative and political processes (Bennell, 1996a, 1996b). If salaries are not based on the marginal productivity of an individual, then RORE calculations violate their very theoretical underpinnings: human capital theory postulates that education increases the productive capacity of the individual and this increase in productivity is reflected by the higher wage the individual receives in the labour market (*ibid.*).

Despite the shortcomings of RORE, which prompted Paul Bennell to declare that RORE ‘estimators are so flawed that they should be discarded altogether in any serious discussion of education investment priorities for both the continent as a whole and for individual countries’ (Bennell, 1996a, p. 195), findings from these calculations provide backing for global efforts to promote primary education. Beginning with education for all (EFA) in the 1990s, governments and key development agencies committed themselves to the achievement of universal primary education (UPE) for all children by year 2000. This target was extended to 2015 when it was adopted as the second goal of the UN Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs), which set out to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere would be able to complete a full course of primary education. In addition, the third goal, which promotes gender equality, aimed to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and those at all other levels of education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2015; United Nations, 2015).

RORE findings also provided the World Bank with the proof and justification it needed to promote a shift in resources towards the lower levels of education, especially as it had already raised concerns about the prevailing bias in education

resource distribution against the lower levels of education in the 1970s (WB, 1974).³⁸ In addition, RORE findings also complemented the IMF's stabilisation programmes that aimed at reducing government expenditure, especially since per unit costs on higher education were significantly higher than at lower levels of education.

From the 1980s, the World Bank actively encouraged (mostly via loan conditionalities) national governments, as well as other international agencies working in the region, to direct the bulk of their education sector investment towards the primary level of education (Brock-Utne, 2003). The general position of the World Bank, which was presented by its staff in a meeting with the vice chancellors of universities in Africa in 1986 (as captured by Mamdani in the excerpt below), was that higher education in Africa was an expensive luxury that countries in the region could not afford (Brock-Utne, 2003; Mamdani, 2011; Mkandawire, 2011). Here, a crucial interconnectedness of the education system, in particular the importance of higher education to the functioning of the lower levels of education, is overlooked (Thin, 2006).

The World Bank began with a frontal assault on African universities at a conference of Vice Chancellors [VCs] of African universities that it called in Harare in 1986. There, it advised the VCs that it would make economic sense to close all universities in independent Africa and have its human resources needs trained in universities in the West. Unable to convince the VCs to do themselves out of a job, the Bank changed tact [*sic*], and followed with a different strategy, that of conditional aid (Mamdani, 2008, p. 5).

Towards the end of the 1980s, the World Bank published *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion*. In this report, similar to its position in the 1970s, the World Bank notes that the education sector in the region was still in crisis. For the higher education sector in particular, the World Bank argues that although this sector was important for the development of the region, its contribution to development was threatened by four key weaknesses (WB, 1988, pp. 5–6).

³⁸ Private and social returns to education can also be used to inform government policies on subsidisation of different levels of education (Boissiere, 2004). If private returns for a particular level of education are higher, subsidies might not be needed, as individuals have enough incentive to invest on this level of education themselves. However, considerations on issues surrounding the availability of credit for poor students would still need to be taken into account.

First, the sector was producing far too many graduates from programmes of dubious quality and relevance. The demand for this level of education was also argued to be too high and was to some extent fuelled by prevailing high starting salaries for graduates in the public sector—in the case of Tanzania, graduate starting salaries in 1979 was fourteen times higher than per capital income (ILO, 1982 cited by WB, 1988, p. 72). Second, the quality of output from the sector had deteriorated so extensively that the fundamental effectiveness of the sector was in doubt. Research activities and postgraduate training were also reported to have declined (*ibid.*, p. 73).

Third, costs associated with higher education were reported to be needlessly high. The unit cost of higher education in the region was approximately 800 percent of per capita gross national product (GNP) compared to about 88 percent in Latin America (WB, 1988, pp. 5–6). Fourth, the pattern of financing was also considered socially inequitable and economically inefficient, especially since according to RORE calculations, the private returns to this level of education were higher than the corresponding social returns. Furthermore, governments also covered costs (such as living costs for students) that the World Bank considered to not be part of education expenses proper.

The World Bank outlined a number of policy reforms needed to improve the quality and efficiency of the sector. One crucial policy recommendation was to change the structure of financing by passing the bulk of the costs to students and their families—although this was later found to have negative impacts on poor students (Mazrui, 1997). Further, in line with other neoliberal reforms that were being implemented in other areas of the economy, opening up the sector to private providers and privatising segments of public institutions were also encouraged (Samoff and Carrol, 2003; WB, 1988).

Although experiences differ across the region, the decade of the 1980s was one when the higher education sector across many countries in SSA went through rapid and, in many cases, negative transformations. Limited investment into the education sector in the 1980s had meant severe deterioration of institutions not only in terms of physical facilities, but also in teaching and research capacities (Ajayi et al., 1996; Brock-Utne, 2003; Coombe, 1991; Mamdani, 1993; Samoff and Carrol, 2003; UNESCO-BREDA, 1992). Per student expenditure fell from USD 6,300 in 1980 to

USD 1,500 in 1988 (WB, 1994, p. 2). Research output also drastically declined. Between 1977 and 1987, mainstream scientific research output fell by 67 percent in Ghana and 53 percent in Uganda (WB, 1994, pp. 21–22).

The deterioration experienced by the higher education sector during the 1980s makes this decade a lost decade for higher education development in the region. The 1980s was, however, also a lost decade with respect to broader development outcomes (Easterly, 2001). Economically, the region had not achieved expected growth—even after years of Washington Consensus reform policies (Mosley et al., 1995; Stiglitz, 1998). The required structural transformation needed to diversify the economy did not take place and the concentration of primary commodities in the region’s exports basket continued (Akyuz and Gore, 2001; Lall, 1995; Page, 2012; UNCTAD, 2002).³⁹ As Page (2012, p.ii100) notes, ‘Africa had structural adjustment without structural change.’ Furthermore, not only was economic growth not achieved, the structural adjustment policies had also resulted in severe deterioration of livelihoods (Cornia et al., 1987).

Dissatisfactions with the Washington Consensus increased in the 1990s (Saad-Filho, 2010).⁴⁰ Core assumptions of the consensus—the superiority of the market vis-à-vis the state—also came under increased attack, especially in light of the rapid growth experienced by East Asian countries, which had pursued policies that contradicted the core assumptions of the consensus (Fine, 2006; Saad-Filho, 2010). Washington Consensus policies were now argued to have been not only incomplete, but also misguided (Stiglitz, 1998). Owing to prevailing coordination and information failures, markets were now perceived to not work well by themselves and strategies for economic growth were seen to require a complementary balance between the market and the state (ibid.).

Critiques of the Washington Consensus (especially those coming from Joseph Stiglitz, who joined the World Bank as chief economist in 1997) set the ground for a

³⁹ Hausmann, Hwang, and Rodrik argue that it is not only about export diversification, but also the quality of the content of the export basket. Countries that export advanced goods are more likely to grow in future, while countries that have not upgraded their export baskets to high quality advanced goods are more likely to be trapped in low productivity levels associated with their exports baskets. In effect, these authors suggest that ‘you become what you export’ (Hausmann et al., 2007).

⁴⁰ Krugman (1995) argues that ‘the real economic performance of countries that had recently adopted Washington Consensus policies [...] was distinctly disappointing’ (Easterly, 2001, p. 136).

theoretical shift in the dominant neoclassical economics. The subsequent emergence of the post-Washington Consensus marks a change in theoretical perspectives about determinants of economic growth, in particular the complementarity of the state and the market in the process of development.⁴¹

3.2.3 Higher education during the ‘knowledge is development’ period (from the mid-1990s)

As the post-Washington Consensus was rehabilitating the image of the state within the process of development in the mid-1990s, the structure of the global production system was also undergoing significant changes. In addition to deepening globalisation and improvements in communication and information technology, the global economy was increasingly being identified as knowledge-based; that is, the production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information formed the basis of the global economy (OECD, 1996, p. 7).

At the same time, theoretical developments that had been gradually taking place in the economic growth literature since the late 1980s also emphasised the importance of knowledge in the process of economic growth and development. The contributions of (Romer, 1986, 1990) and (Lucas, 1988), which culminated in the emergence of endogenous growth models, not only revived the field of economic growth theory,⁴² but also changed theoretical perspectives about long-term economic growth. In contrast to former neoclassical growth models (such as the Solow 1956 model) that treat technological progress as exogenous,⁴³ endogenous growth theory posits that long-term economic growth depends on technological progress, which in turn depends on the activities of a skilled labour force in innovating, generating, and disseminating ideas and in technological adoption and diffusion.

A combination of the changes taking place in the structure of the global economy, as well as the emergence of endogenous growth model, set the ground for

⁴¹ The extent of the paradigm change from the Washington to post-Washington Consensus has been widely questioned. For instance, Gore (2000, p. 800) asks whether the change between the two can ‘be interpreted as simply a change to preserve the old order by making it more effective as well as more humane’. Others have questioned whether the extent of the change between the two has been exaggerated (cf. Fine, 2009, 2001; Fine and Hall, 2010; Jomo and Fine, 2006).

⁴² This field had effectively died since its heyday in the 1950s, with the seminal work on neoclassical growth models by Solow (1957, 1956) and Swan (1956) (Snowdon and Vane, 2005, pp. 585–586).

⁴³ In terms of an economic growth model, being exogenous means that the particular variable is determined outside the model (Barro and Sala-i-Martin, 2004; Snowdon and Vane, 2005).

the shift in policy perspective regarding the role of the higher education in development. Through its teaching and research activities, higher education institutions were perceived to be responsible for the production and dissemination of knowledge and of individuals capable of furthering knowledge. As such, the higher education sector once again found its place in the development process. Although the focus on primary education intensified, the role of higher education in development was restored in the 1990s.

Leading the way, the World Bank released a number of influential reports highlighting its shifting position in favour of the higher education sector. In 1994, it published *Higher Education the Lessons of Experience*. In this report, the World Bank emphasises the role of higher education in development, but points out that in the context of SSA the sector was in crisis. The 1994 report presents a set of policy reforms needed to rehabilitate the failing sector.

The policy recommendations that the World Bank suggests in the 1994 report are, unsurprisingly, grounded in neoliberal ideologies that include opening up the sector to private providers and providing incentives to public institutions to diversify their sources of finance; for example, by getting involved in income generating activities or sharing costs with students (WB, 1994). In line with the post-Washington Consensus, the reforms also call for a redefinition of the role of the state in the education sector. This role is articulated further in subsequent reports to be one of providing an enabling environment that complements the market for this level of education.

By the end of the 1990s, the importance of knowledge in development culminated with the release of the 1998/99 *World Development Report: Knowledge for Development*. In this report, the World Bank reflects that the ‘knowledge for development’ discourse had played an important role in reinforcing the importance of higher education in development (WB, 1999). A report in 2000 by the Task Force on Higher Education and Society, *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, commissioned by the World Bank and UNESCO, further emphasises the role of higher education in development. The report is in contrast to the previous perspective of higher education as an expensive luxury countries in the region could not afford in that it explicitly declares countries could not afford to be without higher

education institutions (Task Force, 2000). *A Chance to Learn: Knowledge and Finance for Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* followed in 2001. This report not only emphasises the role of higher education in the production of knowledge in the region, but also criticises the World Bank for neglecting the sector (WB, 2001).

In 2002, *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* was released. Through this report, the World Bank highlights the role of higher education in the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge. Further, the 2002 report argues that without a strong higher education system, it is highly unlikely that countries in the region were going to be able to meet the UN MDGs (WB, 2002). Unlike previous reports, this report explicitly affirms the supportive role the state should play in the higher education sector—in the sense that the state should provide an enabling environment to encourage the development of the sector, especially the privatisation aspect of the sector since the state should cap its spending on the sector.

The report contradicts the World Bank's earlier overwhelming reliance on RORE studies by noting that the higher education sector consists of externalities and spill over benefits that are difficult to measure and capture in conventional RORE estimations. The report also introduces a concept of higher education as a 'global public good', reflecting the growing global trade in higher education (WB, 1994), a development facilitated by the inclusion of the sector to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) negotiated in the 1994 Uruguay Round (Knight, 2013, 2004; Oanda, 2013; Van Vught et al., 2002; Varghese, 2005).

Further affirming the role of higher education in relation to development, *Accelerating Catch-up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* followed in 2009. The report begins by reflecting on the positive economic growth that had been experienced by countries in the region since the turn of the century and argues that sustaining economic growth in a globalised world depends on the ability of a country to assimilate knowledge and build comparative advantage in growth enhancing sectors (WB, 2009b, pp. ix–x). The report praises countries for improvements in literacy and primary enrolment and notes that it is time to also focus on the production of relevant knowledge and skilled human resources needed to

diversify economies into industrial and services sectors. In other words, it is time to focus on the higher education sector.

Through *Financing Higher Education in Africa* in 2010, the World Bank focuses on the financial sustainability of the higher education sector. This 2010 report points out that since the mid-1990s, expenditure on the sector has remained more or less the same (about 20 percent of government expenditure or about 0.73 of GDP), yet the number of students pursuing higher education had grown considerably (WB, 2010, pp. 1–2). Although this suggests a decline in public expenditure per student in the region, the World Bank argues that public expenditure per students per year in Africa (estimated at USD 2,000 in 2006) was still significantly high—more than twice the amount allocated by non-African developing countries (ibid.).

Regardless of many outstanding issues, the mid 1990s marks a clear shift in policy perspective regarding the role of higher education in development. Although the promotion of primary education through EFA and the second and third UN MDGs continued to gain pace, reliance on RORE estimations weakened (especially during the 2000s) and higher education was considered an important component of the development agenda. This role is emphasised by the growing empirical literature connecting higher education to positive development outcomes. The next section reviews this literature.

3.3 Empirical Evidence—Higher Education and Development

Although there are a wide range of non-market benefits (mostly externalities) associated with education to the individual and the society as a whole (McMahon, 1999, 2004; McMahon and Oketch, 2013; Oketch et al., 2014), the bulk of the empirical literature connecting higher education to economic development is based on the impact of higher education to income growth at the micro and macro level. Within this literature, two functions of higher education institutions— teaching and research—are considered key pathways connecting higher education to positive economic outcomes (cf. Oketch et al., 2014).⁴⁴ Through teaching and research activities, higher education institutions are expected to produce not only a skilled

⁴⁴ The authors also include service as a pathway linking higher education to development through the direct engagement of institutions with the local community and the broader society.

labour force able to increase the productive capacity of the economy, but to generate and disseminate the knowledge required to advance development.

The mechanisms connecting higher education and development therefore centre on the activities of graduates and of higher education institutions. At the micro level, the bulk of the analysis is based on graduates' earnings. As discussed above, the relationship between education and earnings is founded on the core assumption of human capital theory that education increases the productive capacity of labour (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). In mainstream labour theory, where wage level is equal to the marginal product of labour,⁴⁵ workers endowed with higher levels of human capital are expected to earn more than other workers. As previously noted, this relationship was formalised mathematically by Jacob Mincer in 1974.

While the relationship between education and earnings has been extensively studied (Oketch et al., 2014; Teal, 2011), it has produced contradicting results over time. Findings from the earlier studies associated with the work of Psacharopoulos conclude that returns to education are concave; that is, they decrease as the level of education increases in accordance with diminishing returns to education conventions (Psacharopoulos, 1994, 1980, 1973; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002). However, recent studies (mostly using cross-sectional data covering the period of the 1990s and 2000s) suggest that earlier patterns no longer hold (Barro and Lee, 2010; Colclough et al., 2010). These studies yield findings that are in contrast to earlier conclusions; namely, that returns to education are in fact convex—that is, they increase with the level of education.⁴⁶

A number of empirical studies carried out in SSA report that returns are indeed higher at the higher level of education. In their study of manufacturing sector workers in Tanzania and Kenya covering the period from 1993 to 2001, (Söderbom et al.,

⁴⁵ What a worker earns is equal to the amount of output he/she produces. Higher levels of productivity lead to higher output levels and therefore to higher wage earnings.

⁴⁶ (Colclough et al., 2010) put forward a number of factors to explain why returns at the primary level have decreased. First, the authors point out that this might be due to the increase in the supply of primary school graduates, leading to a corresponding fall in wage levels. Second, it may also be the case that demand for primary school graduates has declined due to changes in the structure of the economy towards more technological-oriented production processes requiring high-skilled labour. Third, the authors argue that decline in returns to primary level of education may also be due to a decline in quality, especially in the African region where the rapid expansion of primary education has been accompanied by a decline in quality.

2006) find that although long-run trends in the returns to education between the two countries differ, the pattern of returns to education in both countries is higher at the higher level of education. (Bigsten et al., 2000) also find similar patterns in Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, Zambia, and Zimbabwe using data collected from manufacturing firms in the early 1990s. In the case of Rwanda, (Lassibille and Tan, 2005), using data from the household living condition surveys (1999–2001), also find that returns are higher at the higher level of education. Using household survey data covering the period from 1985 to 1998 collected from Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, and South Africa, (Schultz, 2003) likewise finds returns to education to be convex.

It is worth noting here that return to education is also influenced by the sector of employment. In their study of urban workers in firms in the formal sector and self-employed individuals in the informal sector in Tanzania and Ghana in the early 2000s, (Rankin et al., 2010) find that although returns to education in general are highest at large firms, the convexity pattern is more pronounced for the self-employed, where returns are lower. Furthermore, the prevailing structure of labour markets can also influence what graduates with the same level of education earn (Oketch et al., 2014; Teal, 2011). Since labour markets are not purely market institutions driven by conventional laws of supply and demand, and are instead influenced by socio-economic structures and relations on the ground (as is reflected in segmented labour market theory),⁴⁷ some graduates may only have access to specific sectors of the economy where returns are low (Agesa et al., 2013).

Although graduates’ earnings are often analysed at the individual level, these earnings have also been found to have implications for the wider economy. If increases in earnings are sufficient enough to boost consumption levels for goods and services in the economy, this may, depending on the structure of production, result in output growth (Bloom et al., 2006). Higher earnings may also impact output growth through increases in domestic savings, leading to an increase in investments. Furthermore, higher earnings may boost government revenues through taxation,

⁴⁷ Segmented labour market theory posits that labour markets are structured along different components and different people have access to different jobs in the economy. These structures are dependent on ‘underlying socioeconomic processes, forces or tendencies that give rise to, and reproduce, specific and historically contingent labour market structures’ (Fine, 1998, p. 108).

although this is dependent on the prevailing tax structure (ibid.). There are also other mechanisms through which a skilled labour force impacts economic growth.

First, taking the core assumption of human capital theory that education increases labour productivity, a number of studies have included workers' education level as an input in the production process to assess changes in output growth (Stevens and Weale, 2004; Teal, 2011). Using this approach, (Mankiw et al., 1992) find that human capital accumulation (the proportion of labour force with secondary education) is an important factor in explaining cross-country differences in income per capita.⁴⁸ Similarly, (Barro and Lee, 2010) include human capital endowment (measured by years of schooling) as a factor input in the production process.⁴⁹ Using census data for 146 countries (33 of them in SSA) covering the period from 1950 to 2010, the authors find that workers' schooling level has a significant and positive effect on growth.

Second, other studies analyse the impact of skilled workers on output growth via its impact on total factor productivity (TFP).⁵⁰ This approach is grounded in assumptions embedded in endogenous growth theory that the average level of human capital in the economy determine TFP (Lucas, 1988; Stevens and Weale, 2004). There are a number of ways in which skilled labour impacts TFP. (Nelson and Phelps, 1966) have developed a model in which the skilled labour force influences TFP via the capacity of this labour to adopt and diffuse technology. The authors conclude that skilled labour accelerates technological diffusion, leading to improvements in the production process (Nelson and Phelps, 1966, p. 70). Using the Nelson and Phelps model, (Benhabib and Spiegel, 1994) also find that the skilled labour force has a positive impact on TFP via the speed at which technology is adopted and diffused. These studies are in line with (Barro, 1997), who finds that the rate of technological catch-up depends positively on years of education.

⁴⁸ Mankiw et al. (1992) expand the Solow growth model to include human capital. They use the following Cobb–Douglas production function: $Y = K^\alpha H^\beta (AL)^{1-\alpha-\beta}$, where Y is output, K is capital, H is the stock of human capital, A is the level of technology, and L is labour.

⁴⁹ Similar to Mankiw et al. (1992), Barro and Lee (2010) use a normal Cobb–Douglas production function in the form of $Y = AK^\alpha H^{1-\alpha}$, where Y is output, K represents a stock of physical capital, H represents human capital ($H = hL$, where h is the amount of human capital [i.e., education level] and L represents the number of workers), and A represents total factor productivity.

⁵⁰ Total factor productivity (TFP) is the efficiency by which factors of production, such as labour and capital, are utilised.

(Bloom et al., 2006) also analyse the impact of skilled labour on economic growth via technological catch-up in the context of Africa. The authors find that higher levels of education play an important role in technological catch-up. They argue that higher education graduates are not only more likely to be aware of new technology, but are also better at utilising this technology. Increasing the stock of higher education (i.e., increasing the number of higher education graduates) would, therefore, accelerate technological catch-up and lead to output growth, especially since the region was producing at almost a quarter below its production possibility frontier.⁵¹ With an increased stock of skilled labour, the authors note that the region would continue to grow until it converges with the world technological frontier.⁵²

Third and relatedly, higher education can impact output growth through the creation and dissemination of knowledge, mainly via research activities. This mechanism draws from an assumption in endogenous growth theory that technological progress and productivity improvements crucially depend on both the existing stock of knowledge and the number of people involved in research activities to generate new ideas (as in Romer, 1990). This mechanism combines both of the perceived core functions of higher education institutions— teaching and research. Through research activities, new knowledge can be created and disseminated in the economy. The skilled labour force also facilitates the utilisation of new knowledge, leading to innovation and overall technological progress. Furthermore, having a large stock of skilled labour may lead to improvements in the skills of non-graduates, leading to even further growth possibilities (Bloom et al., 2006).

The empirical literature reveals that there are numerous mechanisms connecting higher education to economic growth operating at both the micro and macro level. At the micro level, this relationship has been extensively studied (using graduates' earnings) and although findings have changed overtime, they remain robust (Oketch et al., 2014; Teal, 2011). At the macro level, however, empirical studies report inconsistent findings. Although it is generally accepted that education does have some impact on economic growth, disentangling the mechanisms through which this

⁵¹ A production possibility frontier reveals the maximum possible output combination of goods and services (usually two sets of goods) that an economy can achieve when input factors are efficiently utilised.

⁵² The world technological frontier is the percentage distance to the country in the world with the highest TFP.

happens proves difficult, resulting in what is known in the literature as the ‘micro-macro paradox’ (Oketch et al., 2014; Teal, 2011). The next section briefly discusses this paradox and the potential explanatory factors behind its existence.

3.3.1 The micro-macro paradox: ‘Where has all the education gone?’

In his influential publications, Lant Pritchett asks ‘Where has all the education gone?’ when he failed to find a positive association between increases in educational attainment and economic growth (Pritchett, 2006, 2001, 1996). Looking at long-term trends in education attainment in Africa between 1950 and 2010 (using the Barro and Lee, 2010 data set), Teal (2011) also deliberates how the high growth rate of education in Africa can be reconciled with the region’s low economic growth rates. A number of explanatory factors have been put forward to explain this paradox.

First, it is argued that although education attainment is expanding in African region as a whole, this growth is largely at the primary level of education (owing to global efforts, such as Education for All and the UPE goal within the UN MDGs). However, since earnings in the region are not found to be concave, and are instead higher at the higher level of education, it is plausible that this is why education expansion has not resulted in income growth (Teal, 2011). Low returns to lower levels of education, however, does not mean this level of education is not important to economic growth, especially since lower levels of education have an option value; that is, they allow students to progress to the next level of education (Heckman et al., 2006).

Second, the quality of schooling is also reported to be an important factor in explaining why increases in education have not resulted in economic growth. Proxy variables, such as education attainment or average years of schooling, do not capture whether individuals are indeed learning (Hawkes and Ugur, 2012). (Pritchett, 2013) argues that there is a gap between schooling and education, and that not all schooling translates into education owing to the low quality of education, especially in developing countries. (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2010) also argue that a year of schooling does not produce the same cognitive skills everywhere. Furthermore, it is cognitive skills, rather than school attainment, that is more strongly related to positive

economic growth (Hanushek and Kimko, 2000; Hanushek and Wößmann, 2009, 2008).

Third, some studies interrogate the very assumption underpinning most of the empirical studies on the relationship between education and economic growth that the direction of causality runs from education to economic growth. (Bils and Klenow, 2000) question whether the direction of causality runs in the opposite direction—from economic growth to education—when they found the channel from schooling to growth to be too weak to explain more than a third of the observed relationship between schooling and growth, or schooling and technology adoption. Furthermore, other authors point out that it is often the case that richer countries are more flexible in their education expenditure compared to poor countries (Aghion et al., 2009). It is plausible that the high level of schooling in rich countries is a result of high economic growth, and thus high levels of public and private spending on education, affirming the reverse causality thesis suggested by Bils and Klenow.

Fourth, a number of studies also point out that the micro-macro paradox may be a result of data and methodology issues. Owing to the difficulty in finding appropriate data, studies often resort to using proxy variables for education attainments that are available, but might not necessarily be accurate measures (Hawkes and Ugur, 2012). For example, although many studies use enrolment rates as a proxy for years of schooling, this measure is an inadequate proxy since enrolment rates are never constant over time and across different countries (Pritchett, 2001).

There is also a question about whether it is the *level* or the *change* in years of schooling that impacts on economic growth (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2010; Oketch et al., 2014; Teal, 2011). Studies that use *change* in education attainment variables tend to find a weak or even negative correlation between changes in education and changes in income variables (Pritchett, 2006, 2001). In contrast, studies that use *level* of schooling tend to find this to have positive impact on economic growth variables (Barro and Lee, 2010; Benhabib and Spiegel, 1994; Mankiw et al., 1992).

Fifth, it is also recognised in the literature that for education to have an impact on wider economic growth, a lot of other complementary factors also have to be right (Oketch et al., 2014; Pritchett, 2006, 2001). Furthermore, it is the case that the impact

of education varies widely across different countries (Temple, 1999) and that different levels of education can lead to different developmental outcomes (Gyimah-Brempong, 2011). A critical analysis of the higher education-economic development relationship thus requires bringing into the analysis these complementary factors that are inherently context specific.

3.4 Towards an Alternative Framework: Higher Education as a System of Provision

The bulk of the empirical literature discussed above is built on the propositions of human capital theory. While human capital theory is not the only theory connecting higher education to development in general,⁵³ this theory dominant within the development economics discipline and has played a particularly important role in education policy formulation in the SSA region, especially after its adoption by the World Bank. Notwithstanding the influence this theory has had in economics and the wider development field, its core propositions have been subject to a wide range of critiques (Amsden, 2010; Blaug, 1976; Bowles and Gintis, 1975; Fine, 1998; Fine and Rose, 2001; Johnston, 2011; Rose, 2006; Spence, 1973; Stiglitz, 1975).

One important critique that is particularly relevant for this study is put forward by Ben Fine and Pauline Rose, who argue that human capital theory is not a theory of education *per se* and that the core conceptualisation of education using the narrow technical framework of cost-benefit analysis could, in effect, be applied to any activity that yields economic returns (Fine and Rose, 2001; Rose, 2006). The focus on education as a form of investment means that the theory only deals with a small aspect of education and leaves other aspects of education, such as the process surrounding the delivery of education, outside analysis (*ibid.*).

⁵³ There is a range of alternative perspectives. For example, see Freire's concept of education as a tool for social liberation in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970). In contrast to this perspective, see, for example, the concept of education as a tool for the socialisation of students to fit into the capitalist order, as reflected in the work of (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The idea that education plays an important role in producing and reproducing social norms and structures, and can thus lead to the legitimisation of inequalities in society, is captured by reproduction theorists, such (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Finally, Sen's concept of entitlement and capability views education from a wider human development perspective. In this approach, attaining higher education increases the capability of an individual to expand his/her freedoms to achieve the type of lifestyle he/she chooses to lead and has a reason to value (Sen, 1999, pp. 74–76).

This study utilises a system of provision (SOP) as an analytical framework to examine the higher education sector. The central proposition of the SOP approach is that each good or service produced and consumed in the economy has its own unique chain of activities linking together its creation and consumption (Bayliss et al., 2013; Fine, 2002; Fine and Hall, 2010; Fine and Leopold, 1993; Saad-Filho, 2000). The SOP for a good or service can thus be defined as the integral unit of social and economic factors that play a part in the creation of a good or service and its use (Bayliss et al., 2013).

The SOP approach was developed by (Fine and Leopold, 1993) as an alternative to orthodox understandings of consumption. In contrast to neoclassical consumer theory where consumption patterns are derived from a representative consumer and generalised across society, the SOP approach sees consumption as ‘inherently linked to the chains of production which, in turn, are shaped by many parameters including social, political, economic, geographic and historical factors’ (Bayliss et al., 2013, p. 1). The following two factors capture the core elements of the SOP approach that are pertinent for this study.

First, the SOP framework utilises a vertical analytical approach, which means it recognises that goods or services differ significantly from each other in their modes of provision and in the social and economic structures and processes that play part in their creation and consumption (Bayliss et al., 2013; Fine, 2002; Fine and Hall, 2010; Saad-Filho, 2000). The SOP approach therefore starts with the good or service that is being provided or consumed and identifies the distinct and distinctly structured systems that are specific to that particular good or service (Bayliss et al., 2013).

In contrast, neoclassical consumer theory utilises a horizontal analytical framework that generalises consumption patterns across a wide range of goods and services. Mainstream analysis starts with a representative consumer and explains consumption and the consumer within the narrow scope of utility function, preference, and the optimisation behaviour of the rational consumer (Fine, 2002; Fine and Leopold, 1993). Apart from income and price considerations, consumption patterns of a representative consumer can be generalised across a wide range of goods and services. Although this lumping together of different commodities that are provided and consumed in distinct ways may simplify analysis, it restricts a fuller

understanding of what it is consumed and why (Saad-Filho, 2000, p. 211).

Within the SOP approach, therefore, the provision of education in general is considered to be very different from the provision of any other service. The delivery of education contains its own unique combination of socio-economic forces that interact with each other and with other context-specific factors outside the immediate education system to determine the type and structure of provision that emerges.

In reality, then, this process is contingent on the underlying socio-economic structures and relations and the coming together of a wide range of actors who are inherently driven by a wide range of (conflicting) motivations. Understanding the provision of education thus requires the analysis of prevailing structures, agencies, power relations, and conflicts that surround the provision process (Fine, 2009b, p. 10).

Second, the SOP approach also recognises that consumption patterns are influenced by the material and cultural specificities associated with specific goods or services (Bayliss et al., 2013; Fine, 2002). The material attributes and cultural references of a good or service influence not only how and when these goods are consumed, but also the cultural meanings that consumers attach to them. Furthermore, the meanings that people attach to goods and services may be subjected to additional context-specific norms, such as those associated with gender, race, religion and social class (cf. Bayliss et al., 2013).

The SOP approach therefore recognises that demand for education may be influenced by the prevailing cultural meanings that are associated with education. In contrast to human capital theory, the SOP approach proposes that investing in education has a very different meaning to investing in physical assets. Although individuals may be influenced by economic factors, the cultural meanings associated with education in a particular context play an important part in the formulation of demand to pursue education. Since cultural meanings are also dependent on the identity of consumers themselves, patterns of demand for education may vary.

Although the SOP approach is not a theory, it is highly inductive and provides a comprehensive framework that can be used to analyse education and its wider implications for individuals and society as a whole. This approach also allows flexibility to incorporate social, political, and economic factors in the analysis of the

education sector. The next section reveals how the SOP approach can offer important insights in understanding how the higher education sector in SSA is performing with regard to the social and economic development of the region.

3.4.1 Examining the higher education sector using the system of provision approach

3.4.1.1 *The changing landscape of higher education provision*

One important feature of the higher education sector in the SSA region is that it has undergone significant changes from its heyday in the early post-independence era. As discussed above, although the sector had deteriorated significantly during the lost decade of the 1980s, a combination of the rehabilitated image of the higher education sector within the global development agenda in the 1990s and the high demand for university education in the SSA region (owing to the expansion of lower levels of education and the demographic youth bulge)⁵⁴ has resulted in a significant expansion of this sector.⁵⁵

On the supply side, the number of institutions in the sector has grown considerably—from less than three dozen in 1960 (Zezeza, 2006) to about 668 in 2009 (Varghese, 2009). This growth has largely been fuelled by the entrance of private providers; private provision has been the fastest growing segment of the sector in the region (Altbach, 2005). Of the 668 universities functioning in 2009, 468 of them were private (Varghese, 2009; WB, 2009b). Private providers differ significantly with respect to size, capacity, type, and orientation (Collins, 2013; Levy, 2007; Teferra and Altbach, 2004; Thaver, 2008; Varghese, 2006).

It is highly likely that the total number of private universities in the region in 2009 exceeded the 468 noted above, especially since the rapid growth of this segment of the higher education sector is reported to have outpaced the capacity of some governments in the region to establish legal frameworks and institutions to oversee these developments (WB, 2010, p. xiv). Although some countries, such as Kenya and Nigeria, have a long history of private provision of higher education and are thus

⁵⁴ The youth population in SSA has grown more than four times between 1970 and the mid-2000s (WB, 2009b).

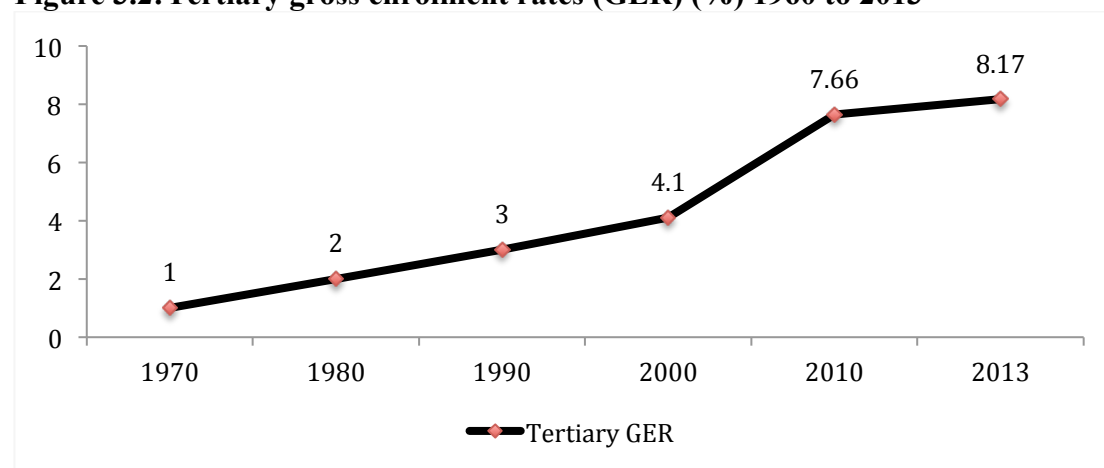
⁵⁵ The rapid growth of the higher education sector from the 1990s was not, however, unique to SSA and merely reflected trends seen elsewhere (Levy, 2007; Wiseman and Wolhuter, 2013).

better prepared for developing regulatory frameworks (Varghese, 2006), these developments have lagged behind in other countries. A survey of forty-nine SSA countries reveals that about half of them do not have any legal framework to oversee the sector (Saint et al., 2009). Within this environment, it is therefore not uncommon for universities to emerge and operate without authorisation from the state. In Cameroon, for instance, universities have been able to continue to operate, even when they fail to meet the required minimum standards (Njeuma, 2003).

The increase in the number of institutions in the region has subsequently widened access to this level of education, with access of course dependent on the ability of prospective students to pay tuition fees, given the prevalence of private universities and the implementation of cost-sharing schemes in public universities during the structural adjustment period (Chissale, 2012; Mazrui, 1997; Oketch et al., 2014). Nonetheless, prospective students who might not have been able to secure a place in the former regime of one national university with arduous entry requirements are now more likely to find alternatives in the private sector.

Consequently, the number of university students has increased drastically. In 1960, approximately 21,000 students were enrolled in tertiary education in SSA, but this number increased to 116,000 in 1970 and to 337,000 in 1980 (WB, 1988, p. 128). By 1991, the total number of tertiary students in the region stood at 2.7 million and was expected to reach 18 to 20 million in 2015 (WB, 2010, p. 2). As a result, the gross enrolment rate at this level of education has shown consistent growth (see Figure 3.2 below).

Figure 3.2: Tertiary gross enrolment rates (GER) (%) 1960 to 2013



Source: Graph created by author. Figures for 1970, 1970, and 1990 are sourced from the 2009 *Global Education Digest* (UNESCO, 2009). The 2000, 2010, and 2013 figures are sourced from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data centre.

Despite the significant growth that has arguably transformed the sector, the absolute size of the sector is relatively small compared to other regions in the world (Bruneforth, 2010; UNESCO, 2009). Although the sector has expanded considerably since the 1990s, this growth has been from a very low base and the region continues to lag behind. Furthermore, the growth in student numbers has been slow. In a period of thirty-seven years (from 1970 to 2007), the number of students in SSA increased by 3.9 million; however, similar growth took only two years to achieve in China and five years in Latin America (UNESCO, 2009).

Nonetheless, the increase in both the supply of institutions and the number of students enrolled in the sector highlights three interrelated questions that are vital for the examination of the sector. First, given the fact that the state across many countries in the region no longer has a monopoly on provision, who are the key players? Second, why are these actors involved in provision? Third, owing to the increase in the number of students pursuing higher education in the region, what drives this demand?

According to the human capital approach, the above questions are largely examined within the confinement of a narrow framework of economic cost and benefits. The differentiation between providers, including their motivation, and the relationship between the state and these providers is excluded from analysis. Only quantifiable (proxy) variables (such as the number of institutions, education expenditure and per unit costs, enrolment rates, proportion of repeaters, and dropouts) are used to examine the costs and returns of the sector. In addition, the demand for higher education is examined in relation to a cost-benefit analysis based on the expectation that a rational individual would demand education if the benefits outweighs the costs. Since returns to education in the region are convex (as discussed above), demand for this level of education is expected to be high.

The SOP approach widens the scope of this analysis. First, since SOP treats education in general as a social and historical construct embedded in prevailing socio-economic structures and relations, the analysis of the provision of education starts by identifying key elements of provision (such as the processes, structures, and agents

involved) and analyses how these interact with each other and with social, economic, and political factors outside the system of higher education provision.

From the outset, it is clear that given the highly inductive nature, analysing the higher education sector using SOP can be a huge undertaking, especially if the endeavour is to identify all chain of activities linking the provision of higher education to its demand. However, the flexibility of this approach allows the selection of specific segments of the provision where the analysis can focus.

Using the SOP approach, the above three questions can be analysed as follows. On the provision side, the approach starts by recognising that higher education providers are differentiated not only in terms of the usual attributes (i.e., institution type, orientation, or student numbers), but also in the factors that have propelled their entrance in the sector. Two elements of the higher education system of provision are identified: actors and motivations. Examining actors and their motivations, however, requires situating and grounding this analysis in the local setting, which inevitably brings into the analysis prevailing socio-economic and socio-political structures and relations. On the demand side, the SOP approach can be used to derive demand factors by analysing the social and cultural meanings that people in a particular context associate with higher education.

3.4.1.2 *The gap between theoretical expectations and reality*

The SOP approach can be used to analyse how higher education institutions function. However, before embarking on this, it is important to first note the gap that seems to exist between the theoretical expectations about how higher education institutions function and how these expectations measure up in reality. In the discussion above, it is noted that the theoretical developments in the 1990s (for example, knowledge-based economy discourses and endogenous growth theory) rehabilitated and promoted the role of higher education in development. Subsequently, expectations about what the sector can achieve in relation to furthering development significantly soared.

Through teaching and research activities, the sector is now expected to not only create and disseminate new and relevant knowledge, but to produce graduates who are capable of productivity increases, innovation, and the utilisation of knowledge created at home and elsewhere. Emphasised in the vast empirical literature, the sector is

expected to advance a long list of development ends—from facilitating export diversification to reducing poverty. The World Bank argues that the sector is ‘key to stimulating innovations in new varieties of crops, new materials, or sources of energy that would facilitate progress toward reducing poverty, achieving food security, and improving health’ (WB, 2010, p. xiii).

Although experiences across SSA differ, the high expectations placed on the sector seem to be in conflict with realities on the ground. Owing to the deterioration experienced during the lost decade of the 1980s, it is doubtful that the sector had been able to fully recover to be in a position to meet these expectations. In fact, since for most countries in the region the sector had only been active for two decades or less before the economic crisis in the late 1970s and the subsequent structural adjustment programmes, the issue may not be about recovering *per se*, but rather about developing the very teaching and research capacities required to meet the high expectations.

Writing about the status of the higher education sector in Africa in 2013, Wolhuter and Wiseman identify the significant challenges that the sector continues to face. As the excerpt below shows, a huge gap continues to exist between the theoretical expectations of the sector and realities on the ground.

Universities [in Africa] are poorly connected with the international scholarly community and given the distances and lack of ICT infrastructure, links between African universities are rather weak. Universities are still based on the model of universities in the former colonial mother countries, and as such universities tend to be cut off from indigenous African societies and communities. Infrastructure is poor and even basic facilities (such as well stocked libraries) are often lacking. Study programmes are quite traditional, dominated by lectures. In fact, there is a heavy reliance on lectures, which does not encourage independent and critical student thinking; passive class hours are the order of the day (Wiseman and Wolhuter, 2013, p. 12).

Similarly, in 2010, the World Bank also discussed the status of the sector in SSA and notes:

Universities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a teaching staff, lecture halls are overcrowded, and buildings are

falling into disrepair, teaching equipment is not replenished, investment in research and in training for new teachers is insufficient, and many teachers must supplement their incomes by providing services to the private sector (WB, 2010, p. 22).

The gap between expectations and reality is particularly evident in research output, which is a key pathway for linking higher education to development. Although it is conventionally assumed research forms an integral part of the core functions of higher education institutions, this is not the norm across the bulk of institutions in the SSA region. Since research requires heavy investment in both human and financial resources, most universities in the region, especially private universities, are mainly teaching universities that carry out little or no research (Ashcroft and Rayner, 2011; Havergal, 2015). As a result, the region continues to lag behind in research output.

In 2002, SSA scored below all other regions in the world with regard to the number of scientific publications and patent applications lodged by residents (WB, 2010, p. 26). More recently, a comparative study of SSA regions (east, west, central, and southern) and Malaysia and Vietnam on scientific research output and citation impact (with emphasis on research in the physical sciences and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), shows that the SSA region as a whole accounted for less than 1 percent of global research output (WB and Elsevier, 2014, pp. 3–4). However, this study also finds improvements: despite starting from a very low base, the region more than doubled its yearly research output from 2003 to 2012.⁵⁶

The gap between theoretical expectations and realities on the ground is also evident in graduate employment outcomes. While the theoretical and empirical literature suggests that the greater the quantity of educated workers in the economy, the better the prospects are for economic growth, concerns about whether educated workers are able to secure employment tend to not be taken into account. This is largely due to the assumption embedded in human capital theory that provided individuals are endowed with high levels of human capital, they would be able secure employment. This proposition is akin to Say's law, posited by French economist Jean-

⁵⁶ Sustaining this improvement in the long term requires investment in high quality PhD-related training, in which the region continues to lag behind (Mamdani, 2011; Sawyerr, 2004). However, there are interesting initiatives taking place to address this; for example, the Makerere PhD initiative led by M. Mamdani (Mamdani, 2011).

Baptise Say in the early 1800s, which assumes that the very act of supply creates its own demand (Amsden, 1997; Johnston, 2011).

The Say's law assumption is, however, far from realities on the ground in the region. The empirical literature suggests that educated young people often struggle to find employment (Filmer et al., 2014; Garcia and Fares, 2008; Majgaard and Mingat, 2012; The British Council, 2014; WB, 2010, 2009b). The transition period from university to work can also be very long. In some countries in SSA graduates have to wait for five years before they secured their first job (Garcia and Fares, 2008; The British Council, 2014).

It is often argued in the literature that the low quality of education and a mismatch between what graduates bring and what is needed in the labour markets is responsible for graduate unemployment (Filmer et al., 2014; Majgaard and Mingat, 2012; WB, 2010, 2009b). However, not only is this type of reasoning formulated in relation to the Say's law paradigm, and thus ignores demand-side factors, it is also one that has been referred to for over forty years (WB, 1971)(Callaway, 1963; WB, 1971).

3.4.1.3 *Dismantling the ideal model of the higher education institution*

Although the above discussion reveals a gap between theoretical expectations and realities on the ground, these expectations nonetheless play a part in the construction of a normative model of what higher education institutions are, why they are established, what role they play in society, and how they generally function. In this model, higher education institutions are established by the state (or the private sector, although the state is expected to play an enabling and regulating role) for the core purpose of furthering development through the generation of knowledge and a skilled labour force. Research and teaching activities are also seen as the two core functions of universities.

While the root of this model dates back to human capital theory in the early 1960s, when education was accorded an explicit economic value (Rose, 2006), further theoretical developments (i.e., the endogenous growth models) and the vast empirical literature also emphasise this. Higher education is defined almost entirely within the confinement of its perceived role in (mostly) economic growth.

This model of higher education has become the standard by which all higher education institutions, regardless of context, are judged. Although this model is more of an ideal, it is nonetheless treated as the norm, the equilibrium. Higher education institutions that are not performing as expected (for example, producing low research output or having high levels of unemployment among graduates) are seen as mere deviations from this equilibrium model. Reforms and policies are usually recommended to bring institutions back to the accepted equilibrium; for example, the numerous policy recommendations included the World Bank reports presented in earlier discussions.

The creation of this model on the basis of the role of higher education in (mostly) economic growth results in a significant narrowing of what higher education institutions are, how they function, and the roles these institutions play in a particular society. Furthermore, this model continues to fuel a type of empirical analysis focused on quantitative variables of education (years of schooling, for example) that can easily be incorporated in mathematical and statistical tests (i.e., regression tests). Although this type of analysis facilitates important cross-country comparisons, it restricts a fuller, critical, and realistic assessments of how these institutions function.

From the outset, using the SOP approach to examine higher education institutions begins to deconstruct the normative model. As discussed above, the SOP approach views education as a social construct and thus incorporates into analysis not only economic variables, but also social, cultural, and other contextual variables that, though difficult to quantify, play crucial roles in facilitating a realistic investigation of how the sector performs in terms of its role in social and economic development.

Incorporating and identifying a chain of activities that influences the working of a higher education institution is, however, a huge undertaking that can lead to arbitrary analysis. This study therefore identifies two key elements of higher education provision—governance and finance—and interrogates these two elements in order to shed light on how such institutions function. Examining the governance and financial structures of these institutions not only captures the internal workings of institutions, but also offers a glimpse into how higher education institutions interact with the context-specific factors and forces that surround them.

In conjunction with the analysis of actors involved in the provision and demand for higher education, and the motivations that have compelled their involvement, the examination of the governance and financial structures of institutions provides a fuller and context-specific understanding of what higher education institutions are, what role they play, and how they function, in particular whether their activities are in line with the theoretical expectations about the role of this sector in development.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter sets out to explore the theoretical evolution pertaining to the role of higher education in development. It pays particular attention to how changes in the theoretical sphere have impacted education policy formulation in the SSA region, especially via the significant role the World Bank has and continues to play in the education sector in general. The chapter also highlights the significant transformations that have taken place in the higher education sector in SSA and points out that conventional analytical approaches based on human capital theory are extremely narrow in terms of appropriately accounting for and incorporating these changes into analysis.

The chapter concludes by presenting the SOP approach, an alternative framework that is highly inductive in nature and capable of incorporating a myriad of economic and non-economic factors in the examination of the sector. Focusing on select elements of the higher education system—actors, motivations, governance, and financial structures—this study uses the SOP approach to interrogate how higher education institutions in Somaliland function and whether their activities are in line with theoretical propositions about the role of higher education in development. The next chapter begins this analysis by looking at the key actors involved in the provision of higher education in Somaliland and the factors that compelled them to enter into provision.

Chapter 4: Higher Education Provision—Key Actors and their Motivations

4.1 Introduction

The brief discussion in Chapter 2 reveals that the history of education in Somaliland has been short and turbulent. Not only did the country inherit a poorly developed education system from Britain (Dawson, 1964), improvements made in the sector especially during the early years of the military regime in the 1970s were not sustained. By the time war broke out in 1988, the system was on the verge of collapse (Bradley et al., 1992; UNICEF, n.d.). The discussion also shows that the growth of the education sector across all levels during the post-war period has been significant and has surpassed pre-war levels both in regard to the number of institutions and student numbers. For the higher education sector in particular, the emergence and growth of the sector has been a post-war phenomenon not previously seen.

This chapter begins the analysis of higher education provision in Somaliland by looking at the evolution of the sector from its materialisation in 1998. Discussions focus on the key actors responsible for the development and growth of the sector, as well as their corresponding motivations. The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part analyses the key actors responsible for the growth of the higher education sector in the country. This is followed by an analysis of the motivations that compelled these actors to take up higher education provision.

This study finds that two key actors—community coalitions (local community elites and their diaspora counterparts) and private entrepreneurs (local and returning diaspora)—are entirely responsible for both the emergence and continual growth of the education sector. While the community coalitions are responsible for the inception of the sector in the country, the arrival of entrepreneurs from the mid-2000s triggered its rapid growth.

The analysis of motivations discloses that starkly different factors inspire these two key actors to enter the sector. On the one hand, the community coalitions have been compelled to establish universities by the prevailing social and economic concerns related to the early post-war environment (such as finding something for

young people to do to discourage them from activities that could compromise the nascent peace in the post-war environment, and the yearning for a sense of normalcy and structure). The entrance of local and diaspora entrepreneurs into the sector from the mid-2000s, on the other hand, was largely driven by the prospect of financial gains, given the prevailing high demand for university education. Internal factors, in particular the laissez-faire environment, and external factors, such as the exposure of local and diaspora entrepreneurs to global trends in the higher education trade, facilitated the introduction of entrepreneurs into the sector.

The discussion in this chapter is guided by the system of provision (SOP) approach. Rather than aligning with the predominant human capital theoretical presumptions about the role of higher education institutions to produce knowledge and labour for development, the discussion points to something different. It shows that the establishment of universities and the key roles they are tasked with crucially depends on the socio-economic environment in which higher education institutions are embedded. Communities in Somaliland created universities purely as social institutions focused on the alleviation of the dire social needs prevalent at the time. Consideration for the economic and developmental roles of higher education institutions, though important, did not feature in the reasons for their establishment.

4.2 Key Actors

Humble folk in every corner of our nation—illiterate villagers, barefooted school children, prison inmates, and even lepers—gave freely and willing everything they could, often in the form of fish or maize or chickens. The reason for this extraordinary response was that our people see in the university the hope of a better and fuller life for their children and grandchildren. (An excerpt of a speech given by Kenneth Kaunda, the first president of Zambia in 1966; (Ajayi et al., 1996, p. 1).

In his book *Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing*, Christopher Cramer notes that wars could unleash ‘dynamics that have the potential to help bring about progressive long-run change’ (Cramer, 2006, p. 10). The post-war developments in Somaliland particularly capture the significant social, political, and economic transformations that are in sharp contrast to the pre-war period. One vital structural transformation that has occurred as a result of the war is the change in the relationship between state and

society, and in particular the perception of society about the desired role of the state as a provider of social services.

The inability of the new Somaliland state to provide social services during the post-war era was in clear contrast to the experiences under the prior regime. During this time, social services were nationalised and the state was entirely responsible for their provision, even though these services were not always accessible, especially in the late 1970s and 1980s. During the post-war period, communities across Somaliland had to re-evaluate their expectations of the state and its ability to provide social services.

Two key factors were behind this inability. First, until at least the second half of the 1990s, the nascent state was still heavily embroiled in peacebuilding activities and state-making projects, with the last major peace conference taking place in Hargeisa in 1997 (Balthasar, 2013; Bradbury, 2008; Renders, 2012).

Second, the state was also in no fiscal position to carry out the bulk of post-war reconstruction due to the financial difficulties it faced. One challenge was the lack of international recognition, which meant that the new state could not access loans and grants from bilateral and multilateral agencies to fund post-war rehabilitation projects. Another was the narrow domestic revenue streams, which were a result of the state not having full authority over key revenue-generating resources in the country (such as the main sea port in Berbera and the main airport in Hargeisa), which until the mid-1990s were still violently contested by different groups.

Although experiences differed across Somaliland with regard to how quickly communities adjusted to the reality that the new state could not provide social services, an alliance of local community members and their diaspora counterparts was formed to fill this gap. A fully liberalised and unregulated economy also meant that it was not long before entrepreneurs entered into the provision of social services, especially since community initiatives were not adequate to meet demand in large cities and towns such as Hargeisa given the sheer growth of the population in the post-war era (see Chapter 2).

It is worth noting here that the emergence of community coalitions in the provision of social services in Somaliland was to a large extent a natural progression

of activities that these coalitions had been involved in since the war broke out. During the war, each region and, by extension, each kinship group (because of the territorial association between members of a particular kinship group and a particular region) had their own militias responsible for securing their locales (Renders, 2007). Local elders were responsible for the activities of the local militias, as well as for the collection of taxes to pay them (ibid.). Local coalitions also organised themselves by setting up non-governmental organisations (NGOs) tasked with the restoration of social institutions and services (Menkhaus, 1997).

The localised war efforts largely moved into localised post-war reconstruction efforts. In the absence of a strong state, local communities and members of diaspora originating from these communities joined together to rehabilitate key social and economic infrastructure in their local areas. Inevitably then, the post-war reconstruction followed what Hoehne and Ibrahim (2015) describe as '*dhis degankaaga*' (build your own locale).

For the higher education sector, two key actors—community coalitions (local community elites and their diaspora counterparts) and private entrepreneurs (local and returning diaspora)—were responsible for the development and growth of the sector. The inception of the sector in 1998 is wholly attributed to the alliance of local communities and their diaspora counterparts. Its rapid growth, however, is attributed to local and diaspora entrepreneurs entering the sector. Although the latter happened a few years later, the entrepreneurs are responsible for the bulk of new entries since the mid-2000s. The next sections analyse the three main types of universities that have been created by these two key actors.

4.2.1 Categorisation of universities—questioning the state versus non-state dichotomy

Before going into detail about the different categories of universities that have been formed in Somaliland, it is important to note that given the absence of government provision of higher education and the limited role the state plays in the sector, the categorisation of universities created by community actors and entrepreneurs becomes problematic. Although according to the Somaliland's Commission for Higher Education, universities are officially classified as either *public* or *private*, this

categorisation does not conform to the standard mainstream definition of the two terms, for instance, as used by international bodies such as the World Bank and UNESCO.

The standard mainstream definition of what constitutes a public or private education institution is based on the dichotomised relationship between state and non-state actors, and is centred on the source of funds or governance structures of institutions. An institution is public when the state is a dominant financier and/or comprises the main decision-making body of the institution, and private when the state does not play a dominant role in the financing and governing of the institution (UNESCO, 2011, pp. 294–295).

If the two criteria above are used—source of funding and governance structure—in the Somaliland context, none of the universities would qualify as public institutions. The essential difference between the mainstream definition and that which fits the Somaliland context is the relative importance accorded to the state in the provision of education in general. The mainstream definition takes, as a starting point, the existence of the state in the provision of education.

In the absence of state provision of higher education, the categorisation of universities in Somaliland as either public or private does not make reference to the existence of the state in the sector. Instead, the definition of *public* and *private* in this context is associated with the ownership structures of the universities and the particularities of their establishment.

Public universities in Somaliland are universities that have been initiated by a collaboration of local *community* elites and their diaspora counterparts, and they continue to be owned by these communities. Here, the term ‘public’ is associated with the ownership of the universities by the local communities where these universities are located. In contrast, private universities represent universities that have been formed by individual local or diaspora *entrepreneurs*. These universities are considered private because a lone entrepreneur, or partnerships of such individuals, have established the universities and are their sole owners. The Somaliland definition of the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’, therefore, takes the community as a starting point

and dichotomises it with non-community institutions. The community in this context is analogous to the state in the standard mainstream definition.

Even though the community and entrepreneurs are the two main actors involved in the provision of higher education in Somaliland, the dichotomy of public (community) versus private (entrepreneurs) can be misleading, as it suggests homogeneity of institutions within each of these broad categories. The dichotomy of public versus private can also be misleading by implying that private universities are for-profit commercial entities while the community universities are not. This is incorrect. Apart from the differences in the particularities of their formation, and thus their ownership structures, there are minor differences between these two broad categories at the operational level (see Chapter 6).

In this thesis, I thus avoid the ‘public versus private’ dichotomy and instead classify universities founded by the two key actors in three categories listed below. This classification takes into account how the universities were established, their ownership structure, and the type of relationships the universities were embedded in at the time of this research, as discussed in the next sections.

- Community universities
- Regional franchise universities
- Local independent universities

4.2.2 Community universities

Taking into account that local dynamics differ somewhat, community universities were generally created as a result of collaboration between the elite members of the local communities (clan elders and leaders, religious leaders, educated cadres, professionals, wealthy businesspeople, and other prominent individuals) – and members of the diaspora originating from these respective locales. These alliances often consisted of highly educated individuals and persons with experience in the university sector. Some of these experienced individuals had worked in the higher education sector before the eruption of the civil war and the eventual collapse of the Somali government in 1991.

The first three universities established in Somaliland—Amoud, Hargeisa, and Burao—were all community universities. In 1998, Amoud University, the first

university in Somaliland, opened its doors in Borama, a town in the Awdal region to the west of the capital, Hargeisa. In 2000, the University of Hargeisa was established in the capital. In 2004, the University of Burao was founded in the second largest town, Burao, to the east of the capital.

As time passed, community universities also opened in other regions. In the eastern regions, Nugaal and Sanaag, community universities were established in 2005 and 2009, respectively. In 2009, Timacade University was founded in Gabiley, a small town to the west of the capital.

The widespread localisation of rehabilitation efforts in the early post-war period meant that the creation of community universities was inevitably embedded and influenced by the experiences of the local communities before, during, and after the war. Since how communities fared across these three periods differed across Somaliland, the timing of the establishment of community universities also differed. For example, while peace and security was less of a concern in Borama, where discussions to create a university were initiated by the visiting diaspora in the summer of 1994 (Samatar, 2001), other parts of Somaliland, especially Hargeisa and Burao, were at that time embroiled in another wave of civil unrest that disrupted gains made in the post-war efforts. These communities were still unable to return to their homes and resume normal life in the mid-1990s, let alone hold discussions on opening universities.

In addition, since local communities were also heavily involved in other post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, establishing a university in a context of limited resources sometimes conflicted with other rehabilitation priorities. Additionally, forming a university presented local communities with a host of other challenges, as the following case study on Amoud University reveals.

4.2.2.1 Case study: Amoud University

[...] We lacked everything, but our morale was very high. When I look back, I think we were nuts actually trying to create something from nothing (interview with Professor Suleiman, president of Amoud University, Borama, 27 July 2013).

Amoud University was established as a result of the collaboration between Borama elites and members of the diaspora residing in the Gulf countries who had originated from the Awdal region (Samatar, 2001). The idea to open a university in Awdal was conceived by the diaspora and brought to Borama for discussions in the summer of 1994 (ibid.). However, when diaspora members first arrived in Borama, the local community rejected the idea of opening a university as it was felt that other priorities, such as the rehabilitation of water and electricity, as well as the maintenance of a local police station, required urgent attention (Samatar, 2001, p. 119). The idea was deemed more realistic the following year when the members of the diaspora returned to Borama to discuss it once more with local elites.

Establishing Amoud presented the local community with a host of challenges, three of which were most pressing. Since Amoud was the first university formed in the post-war period, the first challenge that the local community faced was how to overcome doubts about whether it and its diaspora counterparts—instead of the central government—was a legitimate entity to create a university. Second, in an environment of competing priorities and finite financial resources, the community in Borama had to find ways of raising the funds needed to establish and run the university. Third, in addition to financial resources, the community had to grapple with the reality that finding human resources to work as teachers and administrators in the early post-war environment was going to be difficult. The next sections analyse each of these three challenges in more depth.

4.2.2.1.1 Overcoming the question of legitimacy

The first challenge the founders of Amoud University had to deal with was the question of whether they, rather than the central government, were a legitimate entity to create a university. At the time, many local people still perceived the establishment of a university as something that only the central government (in particular the strong military regime prior to the war) could do. This was despite the founders already being involved in other rehabilitation and reconstruction projects that would also normally fall under the purview of the central government (Bradbury, 2008; Menkhaus, 2007, 1997; Renders, 2012). The excerpt below from a discussion with Professor Abokor, senior adviser for the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment at Amoud University, expresses the dilemma that people faced.

[...] People were excited, but they were not certain. They were not sure they could do it. It had never been done before. Amoud was going to be the first university. The war changed everything, but people still held onto their beliefs and wanted to wait for the state to provide university education [...] (interview, Borama, 23 July 2013).

The question of legitimacy had a strong historical precedent. There was only one university previously established in the country, the Somali National University (SNU), founded in the early 1970s by the military regime (see Chapter 2). This university was the pride of the country and was part of the government's development agenda. The military regime, with financial support particularly from Italy, played a central role in the functioning of the university. At its peak in the mid-1970s, the SNU was a powerful institution and an important symbol of progress for the socialist government. For the majority of people then, ideas about what a university was and how it should function largely reflected the perceptions about what the SNU was and, in particular, the central role the military state played in its operation. Given the scarce resources available, it was clear that the actors involved with Amoud could not create what the pre-war military government was able to achieve in the case of the SNU. The below excerpt from a discussion with Professor Abokor demonstrates this.

[...] There was no government that could pay for the university. The building [of the old secondary school, also named Amoud, that was established by the British in 1952] needed repairs and there were people [internally displaced persons] living there. The community in Borama had to be convinced that they could do it themselves. [...] We knew we could not be a big university. We could not have many faculties and many teachers. We started in 1997 with a foundation course only. When the university officially opened in 1998, we only had two faculties [business and education], and only three teachers to teach the initial intake of about sixty students (interview, Borama, 23 July 2013).

Although there was some support for Amoud University from international agencies working in the region at the time (discussed below), it was marginal compared to the generous support the military regime had received from Italy (Hoben, 1988, p. 407). The material and non-material support for the SNU from Italy, for example, meant that nine of the twelve faculties at the university used Italian as a language of instruction (Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007, p. 103).

The question of legitimacy was largely resolved by the dire social needs prevalent at the time that necessitated the creation of the university. One of the most pressing needs was finding something for young people to do in the early post-war environment, in which employment opportunities were low and concerns about the sustainability of peace—given that other parts of the country were undergoing further waves of civil unrest—were real (discussed further below). This allowed the community to overcome its doubts about the establishment of a university, especially as the alternative—the state—was in no position to do so.

4.2.2.1.2 Raising finances

The second challenge facing the founders of the first community university was how to raise the finances required to establish and maintain it. In the early post-war environment, in which the local community was also responsible for carrying out other rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, this was an enormous challenge.

This obstacle was exacerbated by the fact that establishing a university in a post-war environment required expenses that were not normally associated with such an endeavour. For example, the founders of Amoud University also had to find a solution for the reallocation of the families who had taken up residence in the facility of an old secondary school that was to be used for the university. These families had been displaced from their homes during the war and had sought shelter in the school.

The founders had to enter into a series of negotiations with the residents to reclaim the premises and find an alternative residence for them—a process that took over a year (interview, Professor Abokor, Borama, 23 July 2013). A similar issue was also faced during the establishment of the University of Hargeisa two years later, as it was to be situated on the grounds of an old secondary school that had become home to over 900 internally displaced individuals and refugees, many of them still armed (MacGregor et al., 2008, pp. 245–246). Similarly, a series of long-term negotiations followed, which led to the provision of alternative land for the displaced individuals and families (ibid.).

To raise the required level of finances, the local communities and their diaspora counterparts in Borama mobilised funds from different sources. Given the general localisation of the post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, the majority of

the funds were raised by people with connections to the Awdal region (e.g., the business elites in the country and members of the diaspora). However, the founders also went beyond the regional boundaries to mobilise financial support for the university. Because Amoud was the first university to be established in the post-war era, and because its founders declared early on that the university would be open to all qualified Somali students, irrespective of their kinship origin (Samatar, 2001, p. 120), this brought support from Somali people across the country and abroad.⁵⁷

The coming together of all Somalis in the country and abroad to support Amoud contrasted with the concept of *dhis degankaaga* (build your own locale) that characterised the majority of the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts at the time (Hoehne and Ibrahim, 2014). Explaining this support from the wider Somali community, especially those from the diaspora, Professor Suleiman, the president of Amoud University since its inception, notes that:

This was the time where news from home was always bad news. Hearing about Amoud gave them [people] hope. This is why everybody supported Amoud (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013).

The founders soon realised that mobilising financial support to establish a university was very different from raising funds to sustain it. Although Amoud, similar to other early community universities, managed to assemble support from a wide range of Somali people in and out of the country at the time of its establishment, soliciting further support to maintain its activities proved difficult. It is widely known in Somaliland that diaspora are more likely to financially support new projects than to provide financial support to maintain existing projects (see Chapter 6).

4.2.2.1.3 Human resource constraints

The third challenge the founders of Amoud (as well as the founders of other community universities that followed) faced was the pervasive paucity of educated human resources in the country. While some individuals involved in Amoud's establishment were educated and had experience with the higher education sector, the new university struggled to find qualified human resources to work as planners, administrators, and lecturers. Even though at the time of this research the shortage of

⁵⁷ See discussion in Chapter 2 on the structure of Somali society.

qualified human resources continued to be a problem across the educational sector in general, the situation was particularly dire during the early post-war years.

The lack of qualified human resources was not a result of the war alone. Emigration of professionals and educated people from the Somali regions dates back to the 1960s and 1970s. Many people left the region at that time in response to the huge demand for labour in the oil rich countries in the Gulf (Gundel, 2002; Kleist, 2004; Lewis, 1991). In addition, more people emigrated in the uncertain decade of the 1980s, when it was not uncommon for the regime to target intellectuals and professionals affiliated with specific clans (Africa Watch, 1990; Bradbury, 2008). Furthermore, although in the 1990s and 2000s, people from the diaspora were returning back to Somaliland, their returns were not permanent (Hansen, 2007).

The shortage of skilled workers, in addition to other factors, meant that when Amoud began to operate, it could only offer two undergraduate degree courses—education and business administration. These were courses that were related to the expertise of the only three available lecturers. Questions about what to teach did not feature heavily, as the founders were constrained by the availability of these lecturers.

Finding lecturers was not the only problem. A university also requires administrative staff, planners, librarians, and technicians, to name but a few, in order to function. Amoud therefore also struggled to find qualified non-teaching staff. For instance, even though Amoud had received a large number of books in its early years of operation (donated by individuals and entities from abroad), the university did not have a qualified librarian to organise the books in a categorised and easily accessible way. The books were instead piled in a room non-systematically, which restricted staff and student access to them. In this case, the situation was resolved by an international NGO, Progressio, which aided the university by bringing in a librarian from abroad to organise the books and train a local librarian.

In general, the university had insufficient resources and those that were available largely determined how the university functioned. The words of Professor Suleiman capture the reality on the ground at the time when Amoud University was established.

[...] We lacked everything, but our morale was very high. [...] We behaved like soldiers [...] marching ahead without really assessing the feasibility of what we were doing. We just kept moving forward [...] (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013).

The challenges that the local community and their diaspora counterparts in Borama faced in the process of establishing Amoud provides a small glimpse into the monumental difficulties that characterised the post-war educational environment. Within this environment, the dominant points set out in post-conflict education planning literature, such as the type of issues the post-war education system should address or the specific types of curricula that should be implemented (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Gallagher, 2004; Lynn, 2004; WB, 2005), though important, might not be feasible to achieve in reality. The process of planning and implementing education policy requires extensive levels of human and financial resources, which are often in short supply in immediate post-war periods. This is confounded by the fact that post-war reconstruction of the sector also has to comprehend the rehabilitation of physical infrastructures, as well as the backlog of teacher training and capacity building, which can take a long time to manage (WB, 2005, p. 16).

Although the community universities were established first, from the mid-2000s local and diaspora entrepreneurs started to enter the sector. These actors established two types of universities: regional franchise and local independent. The next sections analyse each in turn.

4.2.3 Regional franchise universities

Regional franchise universities are associated with universities in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. This category of universities has been the most active segment of higher education in the country, accounting for the majority of new entries into the sector, especially during the latter part of the 2000s.

Admas University College, a franchisee of Admas University College in Ethiopia, was the first university to be established under this type of arrangement, opening in 2006. The creation of Admas signalled the entrance of entrepreneurs into the university sector in Somaliland.

The emergence of regional franchise universities can be considered as a strategy used by entrepreneurs in Somaliland to overcome the predominant arrangement of the time (involving the alliance between community elites and their local diaspora counterparts in establishing universities), as well as the perceived barrier associated with high levels of education and experience as prerequisites to enter the sector. Regional franchise agreements meant that any entrepreneurs in Somaliland with modest financial capital could travel to the neighbouring countries, sign an agreement with a university there, and import the whole model into Somaliland. This arrangement meant that an entrepreneur needed neither high levels of education nor experience in running a university to establish such an institution.

In addition to eliminating the preconditions to opening a university, franchise agreements also lowered the initial costs associated with opening a university. An entrepreneur in Somaliland no longer had to worry about the costs of resources (material and human) linked with establishing new courses or with setting up the administrative processes from scratch. Apart from leasing a property to hold classes, the initial operating costs were relatively low.

The costs were even lower in the periods before 2011 (prior to the establishment of the Commission for Higher Education) when the sector was operating in a complete laissez-faire environment and new providers did not have to adhere to any minimum standard requirements.

However, in addition to internal forces, the appearance of regional franchise universities also reflects the embedding of Somaliland within global trends in the higher education trade. Despite the fact that Somaliland is not internationally recognised, through its diaspora (which is intricately linked with Somaliland through its material and non-material transfers) and the rapidly increasing use of the internet, the country is highly open to global trends and people in Somaliland are quick to imitate and internalise these trends.

The exposure of Somaliland to global trends in higher education also highlights an emerging trend within this sector. Although the internationalisation of the higher education sector has been a growing phenomenon since the mid-1990s and was facilitated by the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) General Agreement on Trade

and Services (GATS) negotiated at the 1994 Uruguay Round (Knight, 2013, 2004; Oanda, 2013; Van Vught et al., 2002; Varghese, 2005), the direction of movement has largely been seen from global north to the global south (Miller-Idriss and Hanauer, 2011). Although not extensively researched, the direction of cross-border higher education trade no longer only flows from north to south. The prevalence of universities from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda looking for and finding markets in Somaliland highlights the growing trend in south-to-south cross-border trade in university education.

In the case of Somaliland, the arrival of regional franchise universities also overcame one of the biggest ambiguities that the sector continued to face. Somaliland's unrecognised status places a huge limitation on degrees obtained from its universities being recognised elsewhere. A regional franchise university removes this ambiguity as accredited institutions in Kenya, Uganda, or Ethiopia issue the final degrees to students in Somaliland. These regional franchise universities actively use their ability to guarantee recognition of their degrees to attract students. For example, a large billboard advert for one such university on the main road in Hargeisa encourages students to 'Register Now!!' and 'Get your globally recognized degree!'. The next section presents a case study on Alpha University College, a franchise of a university of the same name in Ethiopia.

4.2.3.1 Case study: Alpha University

The owner of Alpha University is a native of Hargeisa in his late thirties. He returned to Somaliland in 2003 after completing his undergraduate studies in information technology in India. The owner was also the academic vice president of the university at the time of this research. After returning to Somaliland, he worked for a short period in the international relief and development sector. Reflecting on his experience working in the sector, he notes:

I worked for an international NGO for about three months as an assistant finance administrator. One thing I felt during this time is that my salary was not increasing or decreasing. Every month I was collecting the same amount, USD 575. At that time, in 2003, it was good, but I felt a little bit that it was not suitable. [...] My father used to have a cafeteria and one month he might make a loss and another month a profit. [...] This way he was flowing with the market. But in this job, I worked as a machine. [...] After many

years, I would have probably been in the same position. I decided to submit my resignation and I opened a college instead. [...] (interview, Hargeisa, 20 August 2013).

In 2004, he opened New Horizon College in Hargeisa. The college, which was still operating at the time of this research, offered short courses in computer science and accounting. The owner was also involved as a teacher in the computer classes. In 2009, he decided to open a university. Although he did not have any experience running a university, he had benefitted from observing Admas University College being established as a franchised university from Ethiopia. Similar to the founder(s) of Admas, his first step was to go to Ethiopia.

I went to Ethiopia to see whether a university there would allow me to use its name in Somaliland. I stayed in Ethiopia for two and a half months. Eventually I found one, Lucy University, and signed a contract with them. [...] The agreement was that I would use their name, their curricula, and they will give me photocopies of textbooks for each course. Then I would just make more copies in Hargeisa for my teachers to use. In exchange, I would give them 12.5 percent of each student fee.⁵⁸ It was a good agreement. I get technical support and they get royalties in return [...] (interview, Hargeisa, 20 August 2013).

One of the conditions set by the higher education authorities in Ethiopia is that under franchise agreements, students in Ethiopia and in Hargeisa have to use the exact same curricula. Lucy Hargeisa therefore had to follow all the academic streams that Lucy Ethiopia provided. These included law, business management, accounting, computer science, and management and information science (a variant of information and communication technology).

After finalising the agreement with Lucy Ethiopia, the owner returned to Hargeisa, rented a property, which had been designed for residential lettings, and established Lucy University College. During its first year of operation in 2009, the franchise in Hargeisa recruited approximately 600 students. The founder recruited graduates who were returning to the country from universities in India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and from neighbouring countries in the region to be lecturers. The arrangement worked well for the first year and both parties had the outcome they expected. The initial harmony was, however, short-lived, as the owner recalls.

⁵⁸ The student fee at the time was approximately USD 540 per annum.

[...] Things were going well. I was happy. But after one year, I found out that Lucy was not a full-fledged university, but rather a college and was not authorised by the Ethiopian government to issue university degrees. [...] And I had promised my students an Ethiopian degree. I had to go back to Ethiopia, but this time I didn't go alone. I took two Ethiopian colleagues to help me find a university that is accredited and is authorised to issue degrees (interview, Hargeisa, 20 August 2013).

In 2011, the owner signed a new agreement with Alpha University College in Ethiopia and terminated his previous agreement with Lucy. He then changed the name of the university in Hargeisa from Lucy to Alpha University College Hargeisa. During this time, the founder also owned the New Horizon College in Hargeisa. The terms of the new agreement with Alpha, according to the founder, were also favourable compared to the previous ones with Lucy.

First, Alpha was an accredited institution in Ethiopia and was thus able to grant degrees. In addition, the academic streams offered by Alpha were also similar to those offered by the previous institution. This meant little, if any, disruption was caused to the existing students, who, according to the owner, were not particularly bothered as long as they received an Ethiopian degree when they finished. Second, the administrative support offered by Alpha was also considerably more extensive and included issues of quality assurance and regular audits of the administrative and the teaching processes. These regular audits are also used to confirm the number of students registered at Alpha Hargeisa. Third, the proportion of student fees to be paid to Alpha Ethiopia was also lower at 10 percent compared to the previous agreement of 12.5 percent. As student fees continue to rise, albeit marginally, and tended to reflect newer academic streams (see Chapter 6), Alpha Hargeisa had more to gain from the new agreement.

However, one crucial problem that existed in the first partnership could not be resolved by the new partnership. Alpha Hargeisa was still required to offer only the academic streams that Alpha Ethiopia was offering to its students. This placed a significant constraint on Alpha Hargeisa and restricted it from responding effectively to the intense competition in the city. In Hargeisa, where fifteen universities operate, establishing a new course that no other institution offers is an important strategy to attract new students (see Chapter 6).

To overcome this dilemma, Alpha Hargeisa devised a strategy to operate a system of two universities under one campus. One remained a franchise of Alpha University College Ethiopia and continued to function under the same guidelines and academic streams. The other operated as a standalone Alpha University Hargeisa, which offered a range of academic streams from engineering to development studies.

In practice, the above arrangement was complex and required Alpha in Hargeisa to adhere to multiple authorities across two different countries, while also making the internal administration processes more complicated. The hybrid system also proved confusing to prospective students who tended to associate Alpha with an Ethiopian degree, even though new students are informed at the time of registration that depending on their degree choices, their degree certificate will be issued by either the authorities in Ethiopia or Hargeisa. Table 4.1 below encapsulates the concept of two universities in one, with regard to the academic streams and the responsible authorities.

Table 4.1: Academic streams and the responsible authorities

Academic streams under Alpha Ethiopia	Academic streams under Alpha Somaliland
Accounting	Development Studies
Business Administration	Engineering (Civil and Telecommunication)
Computer Science	Livestock Assistant
Law	Political Science
Management and Information Science	Public Health
	Social Work

Source: Field data.

The brief case study of Alpha illustrates the creativity of the entrepreneurs in Somaliland in their ability to overcome obstacles that restrict them from entering and operating effectively in the university sector. A dearth of experience and technical know-how in establishing and running a university does not stop entrepreneurs. Rather, it forces them to seek solutions from those who have experience outside the Somaliland borders. The case study also captures the trial-and-error and learning-by-doing techniques used by education entrepreneurs in Somaliland. Although there are merits to this technique, the lack of institutions that can actively support entrepreneurs with limited understanding of the sector and provide them with guidance results in students suffering when these agreements fail.

The fact that the initial agreement with Lucy broke down for a reason that could have easily been clarified before the partnership was agreed is a case in point.

Although in this case negative implications for students were avoided, there are examples where students have paid a heavy price when such franchise agreements have been unsuccessful. This was the case in 2013, when Fairland University in Hargeisa was forced to stop operating due to the closure of the parent university in Uganda by the authorities there. This closure left about 100 students in the Hargeisa branch stranded at the end of a term. The students struggled to find a university to which they could transfer (without losing credit hours). This was extremely difficult owing to the absence of standardised formal transfer agreements between universities in Somaliland and the fact that universities operate different term systems (see Chapter 6).

4.2.4 Local independent universities

The third type of universities that emerged in the second half of the last decade are local independent universities. The main characteristic of these universities is that they are established by a sole entrepreneur or in a close partnership between two or more entrepreneurs, who tend to be either close friends or relatives. These universities are considered local because they were created either by a local or diaspora individual(s) who originated from Somaliland. They are independent in the sense that they are autonomous—they are neither owned by the local community in the regions in which they are located, nor are they in franchise agreements with any foreign institutions. However, it is common for these local independent universities to have affiliation relationships with external institutions.

In contrast to the regional franchise universities discussed above, local independent universities did not fuel rapid waves of similar providers seeking to imitate each other. In many cases, local independent universities were established as colleges first, offering certificate-level courses, before being upgraded after a few years to universities. Universities in this category are perhaps the most heterogeneous with regard to the particularities of their establishment (namely, ownership structures and types of relationships in which they are embroiled). Considering the case of Gollis University offers elaboration.

4.2.4.1 Case study: Gollis University

Gollis University was founded in 2004 in Hargeisa as a two-year college by a returnee from Canada. In 2005, the college was upgraded to a university. The owner of Gollis was also the head of the university at the time of this research and was heavily involved in all aspects of its operation (see Chapter 5). The initial intake in 2005 was eighty students. At the time of this research, the number of students had increased thirty-five times to 2,800.

The growth of Gollis has been phenomenal. The factors behind this growth are, however, contentious. According to officials from other universities in Hargeisa, this growth is largely due to the close relationship Gollis enjoys with the Somaliland Ministry of Education. Critics say that this relationship allows Gollis to participate in lucrative programmes funded by the international aid and development agencies (donor agencies), in particular the SCOTTPS (Strengthening Capacity of Teacher Training in Primary and Secondary Education) Project that has been exclusively carried out by community universities (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, according to officials from other universities in Hargeisa, each year the ministry also directs a large number of government-sponsored students to Gollis, which has subsequently and rapidly boosted Gollis's student body. An official at one of the universities in Hargeisa describes the arrangement below.

Before the current administration came to power in 2010, Gollis had a very small number of students and was always in trouble financially. It once almost got evacuated from its facilities, but the owner reached out to his kinship group for support and they bailed him out. [...] Now the university is close to the ministry [of education] and suddenly the university has changed. The ministry sends 700 students each year who are sponsored by the government to Gollis. The ministry also includes Gollis in donor projects where the university earns a lot of money. Without the connection at the ministry, Gollis would not be here today (interview, Hargeisa, 20 August 2013).

Although it was not possible to verify the exact number of government-sponsored students Gollis receives annually, discussion with its owner does confirm that the university enjoys a close relationship with the ministry. The owner asserts that the university was involved in donor-funded projects that were traditionally carried out by community universities. He notes that given its participation in these

programmes, as well as in other government-related projects, it considers itself to belong to a special category that he calls ‘part private, part public’.

Contention over the source of its rapid growth notwithstanding, the expansion of its student body has allowed Gollis (thanks to its financial flexibility) to improve its facilities. At the time of this research, the university was expecting USD 50,000 worth of laboratory (engineering) equipment to arrive from India. Such financial assistance has also allowed the university to expand into the provision of postgraduate courses and it has been very active in forging relations with institutions outside the country to jointly provide such courses. In 2013, Gollis was hosting a master of business administration programme from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and a master in public health from Great Lakes University, both Kenyan universities. The owner says that he is also planning to start a number of postgraduate programmes from an institution in Malaysia.

In addition to forming relationships with institutions outside the country, Gollis has also been active in establishing branches of the university across Somaliland. As of 2013, Gollis had established branches in Burao and Berbera. The arrangement between Gollis Hargeisa and Gollis Burao is more of a franchise agreement. The branch in Burao has its own owner and even though it uses the name Gollis, it operates as a stand-alone university.

4.3 The Growth and Distribution of Universities

Table 4.2 below lists a total of twenty-eight community, regional franchise, and local independent universities operating in the country during the academic year 2013/14. Some of these universities are outside the three research areas (Hargeisa, Borama, and Burao) and the information provided in the table below is obtained from secondary sources.

There are two points to note about the table. First, given the limited influence of the state in the governance of the education sector outside the capital (see Chapter 5), the table does not take into account whether universities are officially registered. Second, since the university sector is found to be highly fluid—it is not uncommon for new universities to enter the sector and existing ones to exit, or for universities to

temporary close down only to reopen later—the picture presented by the information in the table should be taken as a snapshot of the situation at the time of this research.

Table 4.2: Universities in Somaliland (as of 2013)

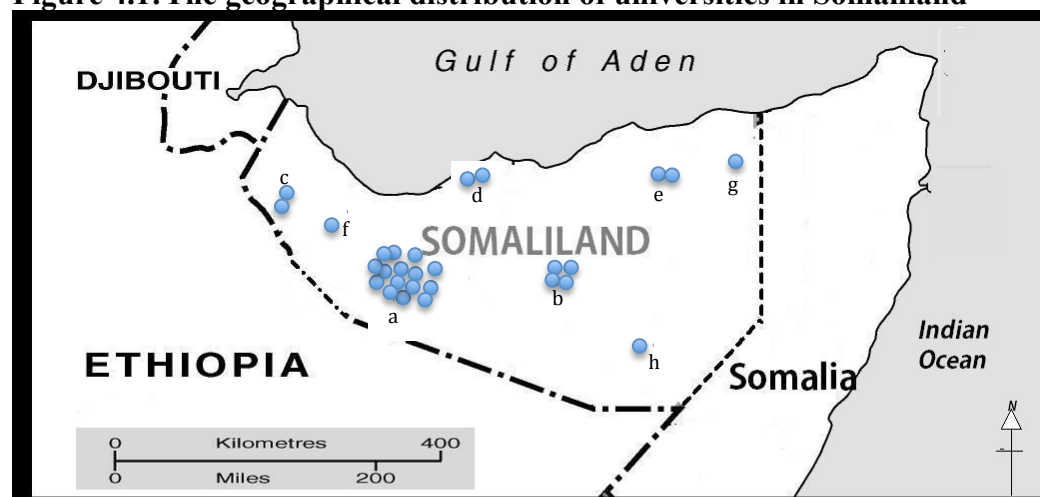
University	Type	Est.	No. of students
University of Hargeisa	Community	2000	4,000
Amoud University	Community	1998	3,887
Gollis University	Local independent	2005	2,800
Admas University	Regional franchise (Ethiopia)	2006	1,533
Nugaal University	Community	2004	1,258
Alpha University College	Regional franchise (Ethiopia)	2009	1,067
University of Burao	Community	2004	700
Eelo University	Local independent	2007	695
International Horn University	Local independent	2006	433
Addis Ababa Medical University College	Regional franchise (Ethiopia)	2008	328
Fairland University*	Regional franchise (Uganda)	2010	300
Beder International University	Local independent	2012	300
Edna Adan University Hospital	Local independent	2003	295
Timacade University	Community	2009	260
Hope University	Regional franchise (Uganda)	2008	226
Sanaag University	Community	2009	188
New Generation University	Regional franchise (Ethiopia)	2010	139
Addis Ababa University College	Regional franchise (Ethiopia)	2011	106
Savannah Institute	Local independent	2011	68
Abaarso Tech University	Local independent	2010	62
Kampala Int'l University	Regional franchise (Uganda)	2013	n/a
Mount Kenya University	Regional franchise (Kenya)	2013	n/a
Al-Maarif College	Local independent	n/a	n/a
Somaliland University of Technology	n/a	2000	n/a
Gollis University–Berbera	Local independent	2013	n/a
Gollis University–Burao	Local independent	2013	n/a
East Africa University	Local independent	1999	n/a
Maakhir State University	Community	2011	n/a

Source: The data used in this table are obtained from different sources. Data for researched universities (Hargeisa, Burao, Amoud, Eelo, Gollis, and Alpha) were acquired directly by the author during the field study. All remaining data were obtained from secondary sources, and thus the number of students reflects different periods (from 2011 to 2013): *The 2013-2014 Report of the National Commission for Higher Education (Annual Report)*(NCHE, 2014); *Somaliland's Education Sector Strategic Planning 2012–2016* (SLMoE, 2012b). *Fairland University closed down during the course of this research.

Although each of the main five regions in Somaliland has at least one university, the majority of institutions listed in the table above are located in

Hargeisa.⁵⁹ In fact, fifteen of the twenty-eight universities that were operating in Somaliland in 2013 were located in the capital. Figure 4.1 below shows the geographical distribution of the universities across all regions in Somaliland.

Figure 4.1: The geographical distribution of universities in Somaliland



Source: The original map was created by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. The author edited the map and added content using data from the field. Each blue dot represents a university.

Geographical distribution:

Location	No. of Universities
a = Hargeisa	15
b = Burao	4
c = Borama	2
d = Berbera	2
e = Erigavo	2
f = Gabiley	1
g = Badhan	1
h = Las Anod	1

The concentration of universities in the capital can be explained by a number of factors. First, education in Somaliland is largely biased towards urban areas, especially in Hargeisa. In the academic year 2011/2012, 39 percent of all children enrolled in primary school in the country were living in Hargeisa and nearby localities (SLMoP, 2013).

The second factor relates to the sheer growth of the population during the post-war period (see the discussion on post-war urbanisation in Chapter 2). Hargeisa is the most populous city in Somaliland and has shown consistent growth during the post-

⁵⁹ The number of regions in Somaliland is rather fluid and the emergence of new regions is not uncommon, especially in the disputed eastern borderlands (see, for example, Hoehne, 2015).

war period. Using extrapolation from the population census carried out in 1975, under the military regime, the population of Hargeisa was estimated to be between 300,000 and 350,000 in 2000 (SLMoP, 2000), and increased to 725,000 by 2012 (SLMoP, 2013).

The third factor revolves around the concentration of remittance-receiving households in the capital. It is estimated that about half of the urban population in the country receives remittances from abroad, which accounts for the largest proportion of this group's income (Hammond, 2013, p. 17). Since Hargeisa is the largest urban centre in the country, it is plausible to conclude that the city constitutes a substantial share of remittance-receiving households. Research in Hargeisa and other parts of Somaliland finds that education is an important expenditure item for remittance income (Hammond, 2013; Lindley, 2010, 2008).

The discussion now moves to an analysis of the motivations that compel the key actors—the community and diaspora coalitions, as well as local and diaspora entrepreneurs—to enter into the provision of higher education.

4.4 Motivations

Given the stark differences between the two key actors involved in the provision of higher education in Somaliland, generalisations about the reasons for their involvement are difficult to make. The next sections analyse the motivations that compel community coalitions to pursue educational interests, followed by those that are driven the entry of entrepreneurs into the sector.

4.4.1 Motivations behind community coalitions entering the sector

One of the main reasons behind the establishment of community universities was the need for local communities to provide solutions to youth problems; in particular, the need to provide young unmarried men with something to do. The general perception is that unless these young men are given something productive to do that would give them hope for the future, they could compromise the nascent and vulnerable peace achieved during this time. Professor Suleiman of Amoud University recalls the community concerns in Borama during the early post-war period in the mid-1990s.

We saw a lot of young people roaming the streets. Some of them had their university education interrupted by war, while others had completed high school or were still in high school when the war broke out. All of them had no chance of getting further education. Of course thousands of other young people had gone with their families to overseas locations. But many were still here and had nothing to do. [...] We saw that the culture of peace that was gradually taking place in Somaliland was not, in our opinion, fully sustainable unless and until the problems of these young people were addressed [...] either through creating employment for them or giving them opportunities for further education. The first one was difficult since the country at this time did not have any meaningful economic base. [...] We then thought if we cannot provide them with employment, if we cannot give them jobs, then we have to give them education (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013).

As Professor Suleiman notes, in a post-conflict environment it was understandably difficult to find employment or training for young people. State institutions and structures that had provided these opportunities in the past had completely collapsed during the war. The public sector, which was the largest employer before the war, also no longer existed. The disruption and loss of rural livelihoods and subsequent growth in urban centres (UNDP, 2006, p. 2006) also compounded concerns to address youth issues. The implication here is that the social and economic avenues that were available to young people prior to the war had vanished during the immediate post-war era. Many local communities had to be creative and education was perceived to be a suitable alternative.

In addition to the potential threat to the incipient peace, the establishment of community universities in the early post-war period was also motivated by the need of local communities to bring back a sense of normalcy that was interrupted by the war. Due to the disruption of social and economic processes that were responsible for structuring the daily lives of young people before the war, establishing a university was seen as something that could reverse the trend and bring about a sense of structure and routine to the lives of young people.

The yearning for normalcy and structure is not unique to Somaliland, and is often an important factor driving communities to carry out post-war rehabilitation of key social services, such as education. In the case of Dobrinja, a suburb in Sarajevo, Stef Jansen remarks how during the time of civil conflicts in the early 1990s, the community recreated structures that existed prior to the war, such as a school, in the

hope of bringing back a sense of normal life as they remembered it (Jansen, 2013).

Since community universities, at least the first three, were established during the early post-war period, which was mainly concerned with peacebuilding, their establishment was a monumental event in their respective locales. The inauguration of Amoud University in 1998 was particularly symbolic for the country as a whole, as Professor Suleiman remembers.

That day, the whole of Somaliland came. The Parliament was closed. The *Guurti* [house of elders] was also closed. Everybody came here for the official inauguration of Amoud. All *Guurti* leaders, the speaker of the parliament, and the whole cabinet were here. Only the president was not able to attend (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013.)

The huge importance attached to the inauguration of Amoud reflects the fact that for communities across Somaliland, the establishment of universities during the early post-war period carried significant connotations far and beyond those typically associated with higher education institutions in general (i.e., research and teaching activities). These universities signalled new beginnings and a hope that peace was not only possible, but could also be sustained in Somaliland. This was largely due to the fact that young people (*dhalinyarada*), who are associated with the future, were now able to access university education. A father of a university student in Hargeisa recalls the establishment of Amoud University.

It was a time of euphoria. We say, look, we have peace, we have a government, and a flag, and now our sons have a future. [...] Our sons will not let what happened to this country happen again (interview, Hargeisa, 25 May 2013).⁶⁰

The association between a university education and a better future is not unique to Somaliland and can also be observed in other post-conflict societies. Writing about the expansion of higher education in Afghanistan, Holland and Yousofi note how students and other members of the community believed that attending university was the only way to a better future and a break from the violent events of the past (Holland and Yousofi, 2014).

⁶⁰ The references to 'our sons' instead of 'our sons and daughters' in this excerpt largely reflect the gender-biased roles within Somali society. Although women in Somaliland have been key in the peacebuilding processes, men are traditionally the key players in conflict resolutions.

In Somaliland, the early community universities involved the coming together of a diverse range of individuals from local communities and their diaspora counterparts. In places like Burao, it involved assembling community elites from two different clans that had violently clashed during the war. A university was also seen as a tool for social cohesion and community healing, as the quote below demonstrates. Here, it is possible to associate universities with contributing, albeit indirectly (i.e., not through direct curricula changes), to peacebuilding (Hoehne, 2010).

The war was over, but people here were still broken. The hostility between the two sides [the two main clans residing in Burao] continued. The university forced people to come together and work together. Even now, people are still broken. [...] Everything works, people go to school and to work, but this town has a lot of broken people. The university tries to help. It tries to repair (interview with a faculty member at University of Burao, 14 September 2013).

4.4.2 Motivations behind local and diaspora entrepreneurs entering the sector

A widespread perception in Hargeisa, Borama, and Burao at the time of this research was that the majority of the non-community universities in regional franchise and local independent arrangements were profit-oriented, and that their foray into the sector was purely motivated by financial rewards. These were business ventures and their owners were mainly concerned with, and focused on, financial gains. The excerpt below expresses this perception.

[...] They are all businesses. They are like shops. We shouldn't call them universities. [...] The businessmen saw the opportunity and they took it. [...] Some of them did not even finish secondary school [...] (interview with a faculty member, University of Burao, 21 September 2013).

The quote above reveals an important perception that was observed during field research that these universities should not be called universities, as the individuals who owned them were seen as entrepreneurs who were not qualified to establish universities and were thus incapable of delivering high-quality courses.

Limited employment coupled with profitable investment opportunities in other sectors that could be seized with modest start-up capital, which was often what the entrepreneurs who had established universities had, was also found to be an important

pull factor into the higher education sector for local and diaspora entrepreneurs, as the quote below illustrates.

It has become a business. Everyone starts a university. It's not too bad in Borama, we only have two. But in Hargeisa, the whole city is universities. Burao is also becoming like Hargeisa. There are no jobs so people create their own jobs by starting a university. It's the same in primary and secondary schools. I know many young men that get some money from their families and they start a school. There's always money to be made in education. Everyone wants his or her children to be educated (focus group discussion with mothers of university students, Borama, 24 July 2013).

It is important to note that the livestock sector, which had been an important sector for both employment and investment opportunities before the war (Samatar, 1988), had significantly contracted in the post-war era. A combination of import bans imposed by the largest importer of Somali livestock, Saudi Arabia, which lasted for most of the 2000s (Bradbury, 2008), as well as the increasing monopolisation of the sector—dominated by a single Saudi investor trader and a handful of local political elites (Majid, 2010)—had also reduced employment and investment opportunities. The following comment from the field highlights this.

[...] There was nothing else to do. They had to create their own jobs. [...] There was no livestock business. There was nothing else. [...] They knew nothing about education, but they saw the opportunity to make money and took it [...] (interview with a faculty member, University of Burao, 14 September 2013).

Discussions with owners of non-community universities during this research reveal that although these universities were established as business entities motivated by potential financial gains, the owners did not perceive themselves purely as businessmen.⁶¹ They argue that their entrance into the sector was first and foremost triggered by the inability of community universities across major towns in Somaliland to respond to the high demand for university education, especially as community coalitions tended to create only one university in their regions.

In Hargeisa, for example, by the mid-2000s the University of Hargeisa was significantly constrained in its ability to respond to the increase in demand. The

⁶¹ Although men established the majority of non-community universities, there is the case of Edna Adan University, which was established by a woman. However, men established all the non-community universities researched for this study.

facilities were still being renovated and although the university operated morning and afternoon shifts, it could not cope with the demand. Furthermore, although Amoud University existed at this time, it was largely inaccessible to the majority of prospective students from Hargeisa. Being located more than 100km west of the capital meant students could not make the journey on a daily basis and Amoud lacked on-campus accommodation facilities for out-of-town students.

In addition, some of these entrepreneurs argue that they also entered into education provision to play their part in rebuilding Somaliland. Evidence of this is the substantial number of scholarships that these universities offered to poor students annually. For example, Admas reports that each year it provides fifty full scholarships to students selected by the Ministry of Education. Gollis and Alpha reportedly offer similar scholarship programmes.

4.4.3 Merging of motivations

One observation that can be made about the motivations of the key actors involved in the provision of higher education in Somaliland is that even though the motivations that propelled them to enter the sector are very different, especially given the timing, their reasons for staying in the sector have shifted over the years. At the time of this research, the prevailing motivation observed across all researched institutions was to find ways to beat the competition and increase the institution's market share (in terms of student numbers). Since none of the universities were fully funded by the state or any other entities, the strategies that the universities employed to raise funds blurred any distinction between community and non-community universities (see Chapter 6).

4.5 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter reveals that two key actors—community coalitions and entrepreneurs—have been responsible for the growth of the higher education sector in Somaliland. The Somaliland case study demonstrates that in contrast to the conventional treatment of universities as institutions created for the production of knowledge and labour in order to further economic growth and development, the ways in which universities are established and the role they play in a society are influenced and shaped by their surrounding historical and contemporary socio-economic environments. This is in line with the core propositions of the SOP

framework. There are neither preset ways that universities emerge, nor preset roles that universities play in a given society.

The next chapter continues to shed light on the provision of university education by analysing how the universities established by these two actors function. The chapter analyses both institution-level and sector-level governance, where the state, through the Commission for Higher Education, is trying to establish itself as a governing body.

Chapter 5: Governance of the Higher Education Sector

5.1 Introduction

The discussion in the previous chapter reveals that two key non-state actors—community coalitions (local community elites and their diaspora counterparts) and private entrepreneurs (local and returning diaspora)—have been entirely responsible for the emergence and growth of the higher education sector in Somaliland. The discussion also shows that the development of the sector through community coalitions was motivated by existing social needs at the time of their establishment—needs that were specifically linked to the early post-war environment.

This chapter continues to explore higher education provision by beginning to analyse how universities in Somaliland function. The chapter focuses on how the sector is governed, as understanding how universities are led and managed provides important insights into how institutions in Somaliland operate and to what extent their activities are geared towards positive development outcomes. Effective governance is particularly crucial in ensuring that limited resources are efficiently managed and directed towards activities that augment the development returns of higher educational institutions.

This chapter is organised into two main parts. The first part focuses on the role of the Somaliland state, via the Commission for Higher Education, in the governance of the education sector. Findings in this section highlight that due to the significant structural constraints that the Commission faces—chief among them is the lack of a legal mandate to back its activities and the strong opposition from existing providers that have been accustomed to operating in a complete *laissez-faire* environment—it has played only a marginal role in the administration of the sector at the time of this research (2013). The second part of the chapter analyses institutional-level governance. Findings in this section reveal that although formal governance structures do exist in Somaliland, how universities are actually led depends on a complex interplay of factors, including the prevailing social structures and relations on the ground.

5.2 Somaliland State and the Governance of the Higher Education Sector

It's not the fault of businessmen that we now have universities everywhere. It is the government's fault. At the beginning, only communities were opening universities so they [the government] trusted the community. They [the government] did not need to do anything and therefore they did not need to prepare anything. They did not think everyone would start opening universities. By the time the government woke up, it was too late (interview with twenty-five-year-old male graduate, Gollis University, 2011 cohort, Hargeisa, 31 August 2013).

The relationship between the Somaliland state and the higher education sector has been one in which the state has constantly been playing catch-up. When the sector materialised in the late 1990s through community coalitions, the nascent government, though not directly involved, supported it. For example, when universities in Amoud and Hargeisa were established, the government backed the communities in these locales by signing over the use of premises that had been used as secondary schools before the war, to be used as university campuses. The state also attended the inauguration of the early universities and praised the communities for their efforts in the rebuilding of Somaliland.

Until at least the mid-2000s, the state thus had a courteous relationship with the higher education sector, which at this time only included community universities. Although no framework existed to formally accredit and license universities back then, community universities were considered public universities and were *de facto* licensed and accredited. As a gesture of goodwill, the state also started to provide a small sum, ranging from USD 16,000 to 25,000 per annum, to these universities, while not interfering with the universities' activities or how they were run. In fact, the state was only called in when universities faced critical management problems that led to, or threatened, their closure (discussed below). When local communities themselves could not resolve these issues, the state stepped in and acted as a mediator.

During the early 2000s, the state was also in the process of consolidating its role in the education sector, especially at the lower levels, and embarked on a process of formalisation of the education infrastructure (SLMoE, 2012b). In 2005, the Somaliland National Education Policy was developed and a year later the Teacher Education Policy document was released. In 2007, the Somaliland Education Act, a

legal basis for the organisation and delivery of education in the country, was enacted. The policy documents and the Somaliland Education Act, however, neither contained specific provisions for the governance of the higher education sector nor established an entity that was legally mandated to accredit higher education institutions. In effect, the state had left the management of higher education to the universities themselves. In short, community actors had created universities so they were also responsible for them.

When private entrepreneurs entered the higher education sector in the mid-2000s, the relationship between the state and the sector significantly changed. As it quickly expanded—of the twenty-eight universities functioning in the sector in 2013, at least twenty were established in 2005 or later—the state started to take a different view of the actors in the sector. In particular, the *de facto* accreditation that community universities enjoyed was not extended to regional franchise or local independent universities (see Chapter 4).

As universities continued to emerge and cities such as Hargeisa began to be referred to as the ‘city of universities’, concerns about the quality of education on offer also grew. At the same time, management troubles facing community universities, in particular those in Hargeisa and Burao, continued to persist (discussed below), further emphasising the need to create a formal entity that would oversee the accreditation of universities and their activities.

The sector needed to be professionalised. We needed an entity to oversee what universities were doing. Universities needed to be held accountable. We thought the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya, with minor adjustments, would be a good model for Somaliland (interview with a university official, Borama, 27 July 2013).

On 6 August 2011, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) was established by a president’s decree.⁶² The decree outlines that the body is tasked with the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of higher education institutions, in particular issues surrounding quality (SLMoE, 2012b, p. 66). It is also responsible for advising the Ministry of Education on issues related to the accreditation of new

⁶² From 2014 onward, however, the Commission for Higher Education appeared in official documents as the National Commission for Higher Education.

institutions. The CHE was expected to become the first point of contact for new universities. At the time of its establishment, an executive secretariat appointed by Somaliland's president led the CHE. The secretariat was chaired by the minister of education and had about ten commissioners, including the heads of the community universities in Hargeisa, Burao, and Borama, civil servants, and other highly respected members of the community.

After the establishment of the CHE, the process for opening a university was as follows. Before a university is established, the founders are required to lodge an application with the specified documentation to prove that the institution meets the basic criteria to be considered for accreditation by the CHE. The list of criteria, which was released by the CHE secretariat on 15 September 2013, is extensive and covers physical facilities, governance structures, financial structures, qualifications of academic staff, and the curricula. A benchmark for minimum standards on each of the criterion was to be based on the standards already achieved by Amoud University (interview with Professor Suleiman, Borama, 27 July 2013).

Provided the minimum standards are met, universities are permitted to operate. In contrast to Kenya, permission to operate constituted full accreditation that would not have to be reviewed or updated after a certain period of time. However, even with this process in place, it is not uncommon for universities to open without authorisation. In 2013, for example, Kampala International University was advertising to recruit students in Hargeisa without having obtained authorisation to establish a university (interview with an official at the CHE, Hargeisa, 13 October 2013).

Putting in place a process for the establishment of new universities is, however, very different from developing processes for the regulation of existing universities. When the CHE was formed in 2011, twenty-four universities were already operating in Somaliland. Apart from the first three community universities that had a close relationship with the state, the others were all considered to be operating without authorisation. The CHE thus had to go through a process of registering all universities in the sector, as the excerpt below indicates.

We came into the picture a bit late. Most of these universities had already been opened and apart from the oldest three universities, none of them were officially registered. We had to send a questionnaire to the

universities to find out what they are and what they do. Who owns the university? What governance structures do they have? What do they teach? Who are the teachers? What type of facilities do they have? What is their annual budget? Then, we started the physical inspections (interview with director of the CHE, Hargeisa, 13 October 2013).

The process of data collection proved difficult due to a number of factors. First, it was partly hindered by the fact that universities were accustomed to operating without having to answer to the government. Many resisted the sudden request by the government to disclose information that they largely did not have.

Second and relatedly, since the majority of universities in the sector functioned very informally, they simply did not have the bulk of the information that the CHE had requested; for example, audited financial statements and information about governance structures. Although this process did force some universities to professionalise—creating processes and structures—others did not return the questionnaires (interview with an official at the CHE, Hargeisa, 13 October 2013).

Third, the CHE mainly focused attention on the universities located in the capital, Hargeisa. Although this made sense given the financial and human resource constraints the CHE faced and because Hargeisa had the largest number of universities, the fact that the CHE had little authority outside Hargeisa, such as in the eastern regions where universities continue to operate without registration, meant some universities in the capital also challenged its authority and simply refused to respond.

Despite resistance, by 2013, the CHE had managed to collect data from the majority of universities and had initiated physical inspections, mostly in Hargeisa. The procedure for physical inspection is as follows. Officials from the CHE physically inspect the facilities and observe processes and structures. If weaknesses are found, the university is given time to fix the problems. If the university fails to correct the identified issues within the required time frame, then the CHE can initiate the closure of the university (interview with the director of the CHE, Hargeisa, 12 February 2013).

In reality, however, the ability of the CHE to impose closure has been aggressively challenged by universities. First, some universities contended that the

CHE has no legal mandate to impose closure. They argued that the 2007 Education Act did not provide provisions for the governance of the higher education sector and unless a Higher Education Act is established, the CHE has neither the legal backing it requires for its activities nor for its very existence. Furthermore, the president's decree that facilitated the creation of the CHE in the first place was argued to not be legally binding. The mere presence of the CHE in the sector was thus argued to be illegal. However, Professor Suleiman, the president of Amoud University, who had been instrumental in the creation of the CHE, strongly rejects this argument.

They [the universities] are wrong. A president's decree is an administrative law and it is therefore legally enforceable. The Commission has a legal authority to act and can close universities. The problem we have is not the legal issues, but the human and financial resources that the Commission needs to be able to work effectively (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013).

While questions about the legality of CHE activities remained contested, in 2013, with financial and technical support from Save the Children International, the CHE initiated a draft bill for the establishment of the Higher Education Act. As of April 2016, this bill was still pending in parliament. As the director of the CHE reflects:

We are now working with the support of our development partners to create a Higher Education Draft Bill to pass to parliament. We need a Higher Education Act to regulate all the functions of the higher education system in Somaliland. But, even now we have the power and a mandate for our work. We have a president's decree. This is an administrative law and it gives us the power. We have the power to close [universities] and we have closed some already (interview, Hargeisa, 13 October 2013).

The reference to the closures in the excerpt above relates to two incidents. The first is the closing down of Fairland University, a franchisee of Fairland University in Uganda, in 2013. Although the CHE was marginally involved, the closure was instigated by the parent university in Uganda, which was in the process of being shut down by the authorities there. The franchisee in Somaliland was thus no longer in a position to provide Ugandan degrees to its students and had no choice but to close. In this case, the CHE did not have to force the university to close down. The second incident involves Mount Kenya University, which opened in Hargeisa without obtaining proper permission from the CHE. Its activities were halted briefly until it

secured the necessary documents, after which it reopened. Since this is a relatively new university, it did not challenge the CHE's authority. It is highly unlikely that the CHE would have been able to close a university that had been operating prior to its establishment.

During the course of this research, officials from different universities in Hargeisa indicated that one particular university in Hargeisa was due to be shut down by the CHE because it was found to be registering young people who had not completed secondary school. When approached for a response to these allegations, the owner of the university in question asserts:

No one is going to close my university. The Commission has no legal right. They have not even inspected the university. Universities are just saying bad things about each other because of the competition. If the Commission believes this, then it is very sad. No one is going to close me (interview, Hargeisa, 13 October 2013).

As of April 2016, this university had not yet been closed.

In addition to its legal challenges, the CHE faces significant resource constraints. Its miniscule budget of USD 100,000 per year (SLMoE, 2012b, p. 67) poses significant implications to the functioning of the CHE and confines its activities to Hargeisa. It also directly restricts the ability of the body to strengthen its authority in Hargeisa, as well as outside the capital. A university official in Burao refers to the CHE as the 'Hargeisa Commission', with it having minimal authority outside this city (interview, Burao, 14 September 2013). The director of the CHE deliberates on this dilemma below.

One of the constraints that ties us here in Hargeisa is the limitation of funds. To travel to [other] regions and make inspections, we need hotels, we need to pay per diems. It is very expensive. But, we have now applied for a project with the European Union. We are expecting to get some funds from that (interview, Hargeisa, 13 October 2013).

The CHE also faces significant human resource challenges. The original plan for the CHE included hiring six to seven experts. Financial constraints have meant that the CHE only employed two experts in 2013. This shortage of staff critically restricts the strategic capacity of the institution. Professor Suleiman agrees that the lack of enough qualified human resources means that the CHE has lacked teeth to be

able to effectively enforce its authority and carve its position within the sector (interview, Borama, 24 July 2013).

Finally, the role of the CHE within the Education Ministry is not clear. There is an overlapping of roles between the Higher Education Directorate (HED), a branch within the Ministry of Education, and the CHE. At times, these overlaps result in the duplication of activities, which further questions the authority of the CHE. For example, although the president's decree clearly assigns the role of regulating and monitoring the higher education sector to the CHE, the HED also seems to perform the same roles. The following quote from a university official in Hargeisa illustrates this point.

Last year, we did not have anyone visiting us. This year [2013], we have had two visits—one visit from the HED and the other one from the Commission. They all asked for exactly the same information. I am really confused. If the Ministry is already doing what the Commission is doing, then what is the point of having the Commission? Why do we have to give the same information twice (interview, Hargeisa, 19 June 2013)?

As the CHE continues to struggle, institutions within the sector continue to function generally as they did before its existence. However, new entrants into the sector, especially in Hargeisa, are no longer able to establish universities as they used to. Outside the capital and especially in the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaag, the CHE has little, if any, authority and had not, until December 2014, done any inspections of universities located in these regions. In an environment where the state, via the CHE, continues to play a finite and contested role in the sector, how universities administer themselves becomes crucial. This is where discussion now turns.

5.3 Institutional Governance

The governance structures of universities in Somaliland have two important features. First, these structures are a result of a process of professionalisation that universities have continued to embrace. The entrance of the CHE into the sector and its requests for information has forced some universities, especially those in Hargeisa, to formalise their governance structures, at least on paper. In addition, as universities in Somaliland also actively apply for funds from multilateral and bilateral agencies,

these application processes have further compelled them to develop formal structures. In this regard, Somaliland's universities actively import governance structures utilised by universities in neighbouring countries, such as Kenya. The excerpt below from an interview with an official at a university in Hargeisa describes this trend.

We have to professionalise ourselves. We have to operate like real universities with proper structures. We look outside Somaliland, we see how other universities are run, and we bring it to Somaliland. We did not know anything before so we have to learn from other countries that have been doing this for a long time. [...] I went to Kenya and I learned a lot (interview, Hargeisa, 19 August 2013).

Second, although most universities in the country have created clear formal governance structures as outlined on their websites and in university documents, how universities are led in reality is starkly different. This study finds that a number of factors influence this divergence.

5.3.1 Formal governance structures

The formal governance structures across the three types of universities are found to be very similar. The highest formal governance body is either the board of trustees (BoT) or the board of directors (BoD). For community universities, this body tends to comprise a selection of respected members from the local community, such as elders, leaders of kinship groups, religious leaders, wealthy individuals and businesspeople, representatives from civil society organisations, including women's organisations, and former or current civil servants, just to name a few.⁶³ For regional franchise and local independent universities, this body predominantly consists of shareholders, although in some cases respectable members of the community are also included.

As the highest governance body, the BoT or BoD is formally responsible for appointing the president/chancellor or vice chancellors (VCs) of the university. This body is also responsible for reviewing university budgets, as well as providing policy directives and guidelines.

The second highest governance body found across universities is the university council (UC). The UC is an executive unit of the university usually led by the

⁶³ At the University of Burao, for instance, the BoT is nominated by the Togdheer Development Committee (TDC), which is a regional body involved in region-wide development issues.

president, chancellor, or VCs. The UC comprises the key administration and faculty figures, such as deans of different faculties. This body is the most active in the day-to-day running of the university. The third body, the university senate, is made up of the academic personnel who meet regularly to discuss academic-related issues. As noted above, although these formal structures exist, they are not necessarily the structures that are applied in practice due to a number of factors, as the following section discusses.

5.3.2 Features of actual governance structures

5.3.2.1 *One-person governance*

Formal structures notwithstanding, universities in Somaliland, especially those owned by entrepreneurs in regional franchise or local independent arrangements, largely operate in a form of a one-person governance structure, in which the owners are almost solely responsible for all decisions taking place at the university.

Since the owners also tend to hold the positions of top managers, they are heavily involved in the day-to-day running of the university. They are involved in all decisions, from academic, administration, recruitment, and budgeting to signing off petty cash disbursements. They are essentially the cores of the institutions and in their absence very few decisions are made. The quote below from the owner and president of Gollis University illustrates this.

Unless I get involved in every step of any operation or transaction or action that is necessary, it does not come up the way I want. [...] For example, while I was away for one and half months in India and Kenya for the university, I delegated responsibility to a senior member of my team to liaise with a company in the UK that we commissioned to print our new degree certificates. I left clear instructions, but when I returned I found out that because I was not 100 percent involved, the project did not turn out the way I wanted. Not all the security features that we required on the certificates were inserted (interview, Hargeisa, 21 July 2013).

As so little was done in his absence, this suggests an inherent weakness in the functioning of the university, as well as the successful continuation of the institution. There are also numerous potential problems for students. A major issue is that in reality students are not guaranteed that the university would remain open for the duration of their degree. If something were to happen to the owner, the university

would likely cease operation. Although the owner of Gollis agrees about the vulnerability of this type of governance, he argues that the dependency on him is mainly due to the prevailing lack of human resources in the country, which he is taking action to overcome.

The problem is that there is no capacity in Somaliland. [...] This is why I have to do my job and all other jobs at the university. The whole thing is very new here. [...] The work ethic is very new to people and the culture does not support it. People do not take their jobs seriously. [...] I do not get frustrated as I used to when I came back to the county. I get annoyed many times, but you have to be patient. [...] A huge amount of patience is required. [...] Now, I have started to train people on their jobs. We have started establishing procedures and documenting them (interview, Hargeisa, 21 July 2013).

5.3.2.2 *One strong leader governance*

Apart from the one-person governance structure, the leadership of universities also depends on the strength and respect accorded to its head. The case study on Amoud clarifies this point.

5.3.2.2.1 Case study: Amoud University

As the first university to be established in the country, Amoud enjoys a high level of credibility. This credibility, however, is partly bestowed upon the university thanks to its president, Professor Suleiman, who has been the head of the university since its inception. As of 2013, Professor Suleiman had been in the education sector for forty-five years, serving in different capacities: as a lecturer, head of department, associate dean, and dean. Most of these years were spent, prior to the war, at the prestigious Lafoole Teachers' College, a stand-alone unit of Somali National University.

Because of his long-term experience in the sector, Professor Suleiman is regarded as the main authority of the higher education sector in Somaliland and has been extensively involved in all higher education-related matters. He was key in the formulation of the CHE and has been involved in the resolution of many management disagreements that have arisen in other community universities over the years (discussed below). The huge respect accorded to him might also relate to the fact that a large number of cabinet ministers in the current administration have been his

students at some point. For example, the minister of education, Zamzam Abdi Adan, was his student at Lafoole Teacher's College in the late 1970s.⁶⁴

Professor Suleiman's authority also reflects a salient feature of the higher education sector in the country, in particular the great respect given to the leaders of these institutions. The head of universities have become new community leaders in contemporary Somaliland and are highly respected. They also become important leaders of their kinship groups and are often solicited for material and non-material support. The excerpt below, taken from an Amoud University news bulletin, outlines the huge welcome Professor Suleiman received when he returned from a trip abroad.

Upon arrival, the president gave a brief speech to an audience that had been patiently waiting for him at the outskirts of the town of Borama. The convoy receiving the president then snaked into the streets of Borama, with the president going on a meet-and-greet with young scholars. [...] Future scholars lined up along the streets singing welcoming heroic songs to the legendary academician (Amoud, 2014).

The high respect given to Professor Suleiman brings forth two observations with regard to the administration of Amoud. First, although formally the BoT is responsible for issuing policy directives and guidelines for the university, in practice it does little more than support the direction and guidelines provided by Professor Suleiman.⁶⁵ Second and relatedly, the high social status accorded to him also demonstrates a potential vulnerability in the university's governance structure, specifically on whether it can survive without him and also whether there are active strategies being put in place to mitigate the void that will be felt if he was to vacate his post. About the length of his tenure and future plans, Professor Suleiman notes the following.

Some think I am a dictator, some think I am a strong leader. In any case, I intended to leave Amoud in the past. I resigned three times after the first ten years or so, now we are in our sixteenth year. But the board rejected it and the university council also rejected [...] (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013).

It is worth noting here that the same management structure that brings Amoud a certain level of uncertainty is also its greatest strength. The strong leadership of

⁶⁴ As of April 2016, Zamzam Abdi Adan is now the minister of finance.

⁶⁵ However, the role of the BoT in embedding the university in the local community and ensuring the community is connected to the university cannot be overstated.

Professor Suleiman has restricted social influences that are linked to the structure of Somali society (see Chapter 2) to interfere with the functioning of Amoud.

5.3.2.3 *Interferences from prevailing social dynamics*

The actual governance of universities, especially community universities, is found to be heavily dependent on prevailing social relations on the ground. These relations are mostly based on the relationships between the different kinship groups in the local community (see the section on Somali social structure in Chapter 2). If this relation is fraught with conflicts and contestations, then it is highly likely that features of these will be imported into how institutions are led.

The experiences of the University of Burao (UoB) provide a good elaboration of this point. The BoD of the UoB is made up of the Togdheer Development Committee (TDC), a regional body responsible for a host of development projects across the Togdheer region where the university is located. This body is made up of respected members of the local community, similar to the set-up of the BoT at the University of Hargeisa and Amoud University. Since its establishment in 2004, the TDC has been heavily involved in the management of the university, largely via the BoT that it elects. The BoT, in turn, is responsible for selecting a VC⁶⁶ who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the institution. A deputy VC supports the VC.

At the UoB, decision-making power primarily rests with the TDC. Although a BoT separates the TDC from the management of the university, the TDC nonetheless has played a central role in the management of the institution, which has led to a series of disputes between this body and the different individuals who have filled the role of the VC. The majority of these disputes have ended with the VCs leaving the post.

To a considerable extent, the governance issues facing the UoB have been heavily influenced by the characteristics and structure of local society. Compared to other communities in Somaliland, the community in Burao has experienced prolonged periods of uncertainty and numerous waves of civil conflict that led to the displacement of many families until at least the later part of the 1990s. Furthermore,

⁶⁶ In contrast to the governance structures of Amoud University and the University of Hargeisa, the UoB does not have a president.

the latest period of conflict in the mid-1990s mostly centred on two major kinship groups that cohabit the town, which has led to the continual, albeit at times subliminal, levels of tension between the two sides.

Existing social tensions have led to the emergence of an explicit affirmative action in the governance structure of the institution. To ensure that a balance is struck between the two kinship sides so as to avoid disputes, the governance structure includes both kinship groups at the top of its structure; i.e., if the VC of the university is from kinship group A, for instance, then the deputy VC has to be from kinship group B. In the next rotation, the positions are switched and the kinship group that held the deputy VC position would then be promoted to the VC position.

This rotation has led to a number of governance issues, the main one being the frequent turnover of VCs. Prior to the arrival of Professor Suleiman Dirir Abdi in 2012 (the VC at the time of this research), the university has had four VCs (including an acting VC), each averaging approximately two years, since its establishment in 2004. Although the rotation system was put in place to limit potential disagreements, interference from the TDC, which itself is influenced by prevailing local social dynamics, has led to numerous conflicts resulting in a high turnover of university leadership. The high turnover of VCs has, inevitably, constrained the ability of the university to progress—even though the university was established in 2004, for instance, it only graduated its first class in 2010.

It is important to highlight that the kinship balance that was implemented at the top management of the university also adheres to the composition of the administrative staff (though less so in the academic/teaching staff because of the shortage of qualified human resources). For administrative staff in general, maintaining this balance is extremely important and an essential component of the administration process. A faculty member at the UoB extrapolates on this below.

Let's say, for example, the university announces three job vacancies and then recruits three candidates who are the most suitable for the role. Their appointments will be analysed entirely in terms of their kinship association and if it happens that all three are from one kinship group and the jobs needed to be filled by an individual from the other kinship group, then it becomes a problem (interview, Burao, 21 September 2013).

Although the dynamics in Burao are very specific given the intricate relationship between the two kinship groups sharing the town, similar issues are also found at the University of Hargeisa (UoH). Between 2000 and 2013, UoH had ten presidents, each averaging less than a year and half. From 2009 to 2013, three different presidents served the university (see Table 5.1 below). Factors behind the turbulent governance issues experienced by UoH are complex. Because the university is located in the capital, home to multiple kinship families, this means that there are many claims of ownership that cannot be easily resolved.

Table 5.1: Presidents of the University of Hargeisa (2009–2015)

Year	Name of president
2008–2010	Dr Hussein Abdillahi Bulhan
2011–2012	Professor Muse Adan Ahmed
2012–2015	Dr Abdi H. Gaas
2015	Mohamod Yusuf

Source: Field data.

An example of a conflict that arose in 2006 illustrates this complexity. In that year, one of the founders and the first chancellor of the UoH, Fawzia Yusuf H. Adan, and the management of the university at the time, were locked in a huge dispute that almost led to the university's closure. Although it had multiple dimensions, the conflict was essentially a tug of war on the ownership of the university. Fawzia had suggested that the university should change its name from the University of Hargeisa to Yusuf Haji Adan University, to honour her late father, who had been an iconic figure in the history of education in Somaliland. This proposal was rejected on account of the university being owned by the kinship group to which Fawzia belonged. This proposal also subsequently instigated demonstrations from students and other individuals in the community belonging to other kinship groups residing in Hargeisa. A university official recalls this event.

The university was closed for two or three days. Then the president [of Somaliland] assigned a committee to solve this issue—six ministers and the president of Amoud University [Professor Suleiman]. A key recommendation from the committee was to create a Commission for Higher Education, [...] a body that could work to remove the kinship influence in the governance of universities. [...] Then, we could do away with elders and leaders and detribalise the sector (interview, Borama, 27 July 2013).

The establishment of the CHE, however, did little to change the social influences on the ground. In July 2015, a group of disgruntled youth attacked the UoH and destroyed property, causing the closure of the university for a few days. The attack was triggered by the president's dismissal of one dean, which, in turn, prompted anger within the kinship group to which the former dean belonged and propelled youth (it was not clear whether they were students at the university) from that kinship group to attack the university. As a result of this event and perhaps other issues, the president resigned and the university remained without a president for a few months.

5.3.2.4 *Interferences from the state*

Although previous discussion explores the limited role the state plays in the sector, the state does have some influence in the management of educational institutions, especially in Hargeisa. Since the state is more present in the capital compared to other regions, the state sometimes interferes in the governance of institutions and it is not uncommon for cabinet ministers to be drawn into issues that could have been resolved by the university management.

For example, in 2012 when UoH students announced that they were planning to hold a demonstration against proposed fee increases, the minister of education and the minister of interior quickly intervened and announced the restoration of the previous fees. Shortly afterwards, the president of the university was dismissed, leaving the university without a president for a short period of time. In October 2013, students again held protests over the proposed increases in tuition and the government quickly responded by subsidising part of this fee. In April 2014, students took to the streets once more, heading to the Ministry of Education to raise their concerns. This time, the ministry did not respond and instead students clashed with police officers with live ammunition, resulting in one student being seriously injured.

The interference of government officials in the workings of the UoH, especially when student protests are involved, is to some extent inevitable. First, student protests raise concerns about the implications of these types of movements for the peace and stability of the country. In this case, the pressure is on the state apparatus to get matters resolved as quickly as possible even though this might, at times, undermine

the management of the university and encourage students to protest again in the future. Second, having student protests in the capital where a large number of donor agencies are located also sends a message to the outside world that could taint the picture of stability that has characterised the country for a long time. The implication of this to the quest for recognition adds yet another level of pressure for the state to interfere.

5.4 Student Governance

The role of students in the governance of the higher education sector in Somaliland, at the time of this research, was non-existent, but there are minor exceptions; for example, Markus Hoehne (2010) describes a student association at the International Horn University. Apart from participation in the kinds of demonstrations described above, students did not come together to organise themselves. Efforts were, however, observed at the UoH, where university management actively encouraged students to form an association that could present their concerns to the university management more coherently. The then president of UoH highlights the challenges the university management faced in this endeavour.

Having students organise themselves is beneficial for us. Now when students have concerns, one student at a time approaches the management. They have to organise themselves, otherwise it will continue to be very difficult. [...] We try to help them form associations, but each time students would only vote for people from their kinship group to be their leaders. How can this be possible? This is not politics. It is a university, but it is impossible for them to vote for a student leader based on anything else (interview, Hargeisa, 7 August 2013)!

5.5 Conclusion

The importance of governance in how universities are run cannot be overemphasised. On the one hand, effective governance and management structures allow institutions to productively manage their resources and develop as institutions. On the other, poor governance structures can threaten the operation of universities and compromise their very existence. The Somaliland case study explicitly emphasises the interconnection between universities and the country's socio-economic and sociopolitical relations. Management decisions made at the universities, for instance the rotation of top management positions in Burao, have little to do with ensuring universities direct

their resources to development outcomes, but rather aim to strike a sense of balance that attempts to stifle potential incongruity.

The next chapter continues the analysis of how universities function by focusing on the financial structures of universities and the strategies they employ to sustain themselves.

Chapter 6: Financial Structure of Higher Education Institutions

6.1 Introduction

The discussion in the previous chapter reveals that although the Somaliland state, through the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), has been trying to strengthen its authority in the education sector since 2011, it has largely been unable to do so due to the strong opposition from existing providers and the structural constraints that the CHE faces. In the absence of state presence, universities have established their own governance structures, which are entrenched in prevailing social structures and relations.

This chapter continues the discussion of how higher education institutions in Somaliland operate by focusing on their financial structures. In the absence of state provision, understanding how universities manage themselves financially provides an important glimpse into how universities operate in general, and in particular how their activities are linked to positive development outcomes.

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part presents a brief overview of the general financial structure of higher education institutions in Somaliland. This section indicates that student fees form the financial backbone of institutions, but that these fees are highly inelastic, which leads to providers struggling to cover their deficits. The second part analyses the strategies universities employ to improve their financial viability. Given the rigidity in fees, finding ways to attract new students is found to be the main route universities utilise to boost their finances. Here, decisions surrounding core functions of universities, such as the admissions process, what courses to teach, and the recruitment of teachers, are intricately shaped by strategies to attract students.

The analysis in this chapter also shows limited financial resources mean that the main avenue for institutions in Somaliland to be involved in research is via consultancy services led by international aid and development agencies (donor agencies). However, academics in Somaliland have little or no power to change or influence the research questions in these projects, which are primarily driven by donor agency interests.

6.2 Overview of the Financial Structure of Universities

A common feature of the financial structure of universities in Somaliland is that these institutions derive the bulk of their funds almost entirely from student fees (HIPS, 2013, p. 12). Although the Somaliland state provides a small sum of approximately USD 16,000 to 25,000 per annum to the majority of the universities in the country, this contribution is merely symbolic and in reality plays a very small role in their financial well-being.

In 2013, the amount of student fees across the sector was dependent on the type of course, and ranged between USD 150 and 250 per semester. The majority of courses were around USD 200 per semester. The cheapest courses were business administration and sharia, while the most expensive were medicine and engineering. Since universities operate on different semester systems (some universities operate in two semesters per year with students graduating in four years, while others operate in three semesters per year with students graduating in three years), how much a student pays per annum likewise varies.

Student fees are found to be highly inelastic. Any attempt by universities to increase fees has drawn huge protests from students. This is particularly the case for the University of Hargeisa (UoH), where three attempts to raise fees resulted in large demonstrations (as noted in Chapter 5). The threat of protests and the haste with which the government interferes when these occur typically discourages universities, especially those located in Hargeisa, from raising fees. Even when planned increments are relatively small, university officials and teachers are uncertain about how students will react. The owner of Alpha in Hargeisa notes that although he has been considering a fee increase from USD 185 to USD 200 per semester for a number of years, he is hesitant to do so because of the potential negative reactions from students (interview, Hargeisa, 22 August 2013).

When asked to rank the top challenges they face, all the university officials and teachers interviewed for this study put insufficient finances in first position. Frequent comments are along the lines of the following: ‘instead of being able to focus on improving our teaching and learning facilities, we are often consumed with finding ways to reduce deficits’ (interview with a university official, Burao, 14 September

2013). Financial difficulties seem to affect both large and small universities. For instance, in 2013, the UoH was the largest institution in the country, with 4,000 students enrolled, but it still faced financial difficulties and was operating in a deficit.

In 2013–2014, the operational budget of the UoH was forecasted to be USD 1.6 million: 85 percent of this was allocated to salaries and the remaining was assigned to maintenance costs (UoH, 2011). The UoH does not have to pay rent because the facilities housing the university belong to a former government secondary school that ceased to function after the war and ownership of the facilities was transferred to the university. In contrast to the UoH and other community universities such as Amoud and Burao, non-community universities mostly operate in leased properties, with rental costs forming a significant part of their total costs.

According to the tentative budget, the tuition revenue for the 2013–2014 academic year for the UoH was expected to be approximately USD 1.5 million and the government subsidy was USD 16,000, accounting for about 1 percent of the total budget (UoH, 2011). When all receipts were totalled up against the estimated costs, a significant deficit of approximately USD 80,000 remained (*ibid.*). Not only did the UoH have to find external sources to fund the deficit for its operational budget, it also lacked funds for any development projects. What strategies universities use to improve their financial base is a question that frames the subsequent discussions in this chapter.

6.3 Financial Strategies Employed by Universities

The rigidity in the amount of fees students are willing to pay means that universities are left with little room to manoeuvre to improve their balance sheets. Nonetheless, universities have devised a range of strategies to better their financial positions. This section outlines a number of these.

6.3.1 Increasing the number of students

One of the most commonly used strategies by universities in Somaliland to increase their financial resources is finding ways to grow the number of new students who register each year. Universities utilise a number of tactics to this end, such as using flexible admissions criteria, frequently establishing new courses, employing foreign

teachers, and forming relationships with foreign institutions. These strategies are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

6.3.1.1 *Flexible admissions criteria*

Before analysing how universities in Somaliland use adaptable admissions criteria to escalate their student numbers, a brief summary of the existing formal admissions processes is essential.

The formal admissions procedure usually comprises two main elements. First, the prospective student is asked to fill out an application form and pay a non-refundable application fee. In 2013–2014, for example, the UoH charged USD 20. In the application form, the prospective student is asked to provide information about his/her secondary school education, such as the name of the secondary school, the year of graduation, the examination roll number for the secondary school leaving exam, and the results received. The prospective student is also asked to attach original copies of the secondary school leaving certificate and the results slip. Second, the prospective student is required to sit an entrance examination.

Although the above formal criteria do exist and were specifically emphasised by admissions administrators during interviews, in practice they are used more as guidelines and are not adhered to at all times. The admissions processes and the required criteria are found to be highly malleable and are adjusted pragmatically depending on the situation at hand. This flexibility, however, is not purely crafted by institutions in order to boost their student numbers, but is rather a result of operating in a post-war environment (see below).

Although official admissions processes require prospective students to prove that they have graduated from secondary school, they are not always able to provide physical evidence to this end. For example, the secondary school certificates belonging to mature students who had graduated from secondary school before the war are likely to have been lost. Since government institutions that were responsible for issuing these certificates and that should have held records of them were also destroyed during the war, these prospective students are left with no way of proving they have graduated from secondary school. For prospective students who had finished secondary school in the early years of the post-conflict environment—a

period before procedures for secondary school leaving exams were standardised and nationalised in Somaliland—satisfying this requirement is also found to be difficult. In both the above cases, universities tend to disregard the certification requirement altogether.

It can also be problematic for younger students graduating from secondary schools in contemporary Somaliland to provide a copy of the secondary school leaving certificate. Secondary school leavers are required to buy their certificates from the Ministry of Education for USD 20. This amount is relatively high for poor students and many have difficulties presenting physical proof of their certificate simply because they cannot afford to buy it. This is accentuated by the fact that during the application process, students are also required to pay an application fee and, shortly afterward, the first instalment of their annual tuition fees. This initial payment is found to be overwhelming for many families.

Universities, however, concoct various ways to ensure this obstacle does not restrict students from registering with them. Some universities, such as Admas in Hargeisa, for instance, decide to buy all secondary school certificates from the Ministry of Education on behalf of all prospective students who apply there. Students then do not have to worry about presenting their certificates to Admas during the application process. Although this process reduces the initial costs for prospective students, in reality if students want to have possession of their certificates, they still need to buy it from Admas for USD 20.

Apart from presenting a secondary school leaving certificate, official admissions criteria also impose a minimum grade for the secondary school leaving exam. The grading system ranges from A (highest), B, C, D, to F (fail). All universities researched for this study considered grade C and in some instances grade D as a minimum grade for admission. However, adherence to this criterion by universities is found to be a rarity for two main reasons.

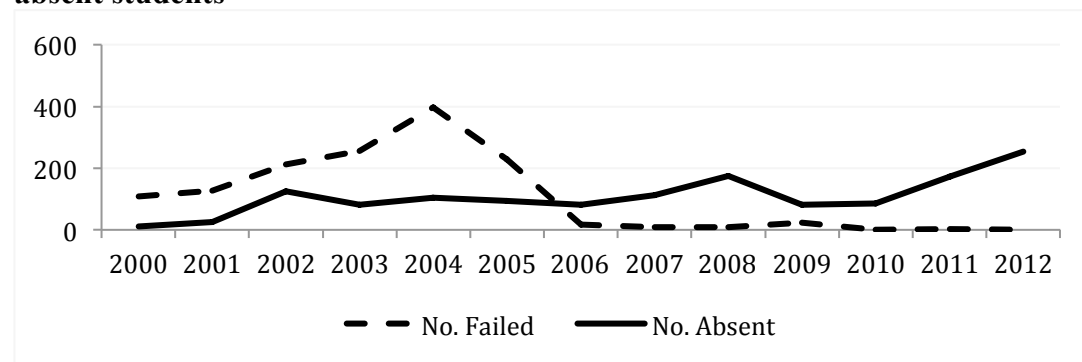
First, universities are quite flexible in imposing the minimum grade criteria. For example, while the official admissions criteria for the University of Burao (UoB) lists grade D as the minimum grade requirement, whether the university exercises this criterion depends on the number of students who apply for admission in a particular

year. When the number of new students meeting the required grade criterion is lower than the number of students the university needs to have in each faculty each year to at least meet its costs, then it is common practice for the university to lower the minimum grade or disregard it altogether. The excerpt below elaborates on this.

Each year, for the science programme, for example, we require 80 students. If we get lower than this number, then we have to take students with lower grades. If the number is smaller still, then we take everyone who has applied (interview with an admissions officer, UoB, 21 September 2013).

The second reason for the flexibility in the minimum grade requirement has less to do with the strategies universities employ and more with the changes that have been occurring in the wider education system in post-war Somaliland. A crucial change that has been gradually, but noticeably, taking place is a shift in social attitudes towards failing. To expand on this, Figure 6.1 below presents the yearly number of students who have failed the secondary school leaving exam and the number of students who are reported to have been absent from 2000 to 2012. Students are considered absent if they do not sit the exam.

Figure 6.1: Trends in secondary school leaving examination results: failed vs. absent students



Source: Figure created by the author using data provided by officials at the Somaliland National Examination and Certificate Board, Hargeisa, October 2013.

A close look at the yearly changes in the graph above indicates that the number of failed students sharply decreases, while those reported absent drastically increases. A discussion with an official at the Ministry of Education reveals that although neither the absolute numbers (of failed and absentee students), nor the criteria used to measure the two indicators have changed, the language used for reporting purposes has been significantly altered. Rather than reporting failed students as fail and assigning them an F grade, students are instead reported as absent (interview,

Hargeisa, 13 June 2013). This therefore has led to the emergence of an ‘unwritten rule regarding education in Somaliland stating that students *do not fail* certificate examinations’ (SLMoE, 2012, p. 69, emphasis added).

There are a number of factors behind the change in the attitude towards failing. First, in a post-war environment, education plays roles that go beyond the provision of qualifications. Since education in this context also works as a system for keeping young people busy and providing them with hope and a sense of normalcy and structure in their daily lives (see Chapter 4), failing them defeats this purpose. Furthermore, for education to be able to fulfil these roles, a system that allows for unconstrained progression to success must be in place. Here, a clear conflict between the design of the formal education system with its emphasis on exam results and the role it plays in a post-conflict environment, such as in Somaliland, is evident.

Second, there is a social drive to prohibit young people from experiencing *niya jab* (lack of hope). In addition to the negative social inferences associated with failing, not passing the secondary school leaving exam leaves a young person with limited opportunities for a second chance. As of 2013, there were no systems in place for students to resit individual exams (Interview with an official at the ministry of education, Hargeisa, 12 October 2013). The only alternative was to repeat a whole year, an option that carries serious negative social connotations for students. It is also an option many are unwilling to do.

Another element of admissions criteria is the university entrance exam. The majority of universities require students to sit entrance exams in English and/or mathematics. Although students who fail these exams do not officially qualify for admission, there is a lot of flexibility as to what happens next. This is due to consideration of the number of students universities require and the general attitude toward failing described above. Results of entrance exams are rarely used to decline student admission. There is, however, one surprising instance, in which the UoH attempted to use the results of its entrance exams to refuse entry to students when it received an unusually large number of applicants one year, as is described below.

In 2011, more than 1,500 students applied for admission to the UoH, but given the constraints of its facilities, the university could only accept 700 new students. One

of the criteria the university used to select students was the result of the entrance exam. When it became public knowledge that the university did not accept a large number of students, the Ministry of Education quickly interfered to avoid public discontent and issued a letter to the UoH, which instructed it to take *all* students who had applied. Fearing public protest, the university complied and resorted to renting additional facilities outside its campus to accommodate the students (Interview with an official at the UoH, Hargeisa, 18 May 2013).

This section discloses that although universities in Somaliland do adjust their admissions criteria to expand the number of students and devise ingenious techniques to this end (such as buying student secondary school leaving certificates from the Ministry of Education), the need for flexibility and pragmatic application of formal procedures is also driven by the reality of operating in a post-war environment.

6.3.1.2 *Frequently establishing new courses*

In addition to having adaptable entrance criteria, being able to frequently establish new courses is a dominant approach used by universities to attract students. Universities in Somaliland look for and find inspiration for new courses by following global trends in higher education, in particular trends in the wider Horn and East Africa region.

Universities in the country strive to be the first university to establish new courses. Frequently, universities, in particular those in the immediate locale, will quickly imitate each other by introducing the same courses for the coming semester or the next academic year. In this context, being the first university to announce a course has a range of benefits that seemingly continue to exist even after other universities replicate a course offering. In Somaliland, there is huge social value associated with being *first*.

During the course of this research, comments that emphasise being the *first* are frequently made; namely, ‘my father was the first doctor in Somaliland’, ‘my family opened the first pharmacy in Hargeisa’, ‘we were the first university to start an information and communications technology (ICT) course in Somaliland’, and ‘we were the first university in Somaliland’. It is apparent that being first or associated with a situation that involves the scenario of being the first and making sure others are

aware of this association is absolutely vital in transmitting one's achievements and receiving subsequent admiration.

The significant social value affiliated with being first can also result in important economic transactions being accumulated. Even though universities' attempts to be the first to offer courses are quickly emulated, and the original university that introduces a course loses its complete monopoly on that course, economic and social benefits continue to accrue. The university that provided a particular course first will always maintain its status as the *first* to have initiated it. In addition, the commonly held perception by students that the first university to establish a course has the technical know-how to deliver that course compared to universities that imitate can mean that even after other universities follow suit, the original university to introduce the course will continue to attract students. The case of Admas below illustrates this.

We realised that students were getting tired of business administration and wanted something new. We decided to introduce development studies in 2009. This was something completely new in Somaliland. We were the first to do it. But we were also the first to start ICT. Development studies is now [in 2013] our biggest faculty, with more than 500 students (interview with the vice president of academic affairs, Admas University, Hargeisa, 5 June 2013).

The statement by the university official above that students were 'getting tired of business administration' captures a widespread perception toward this particular course among students and graduates in Somaliland. This can be explained by the ease associated with its implementation, as one university official in Borama notes, 'With business administration, you only need a textbook and someone who can read it to the students' (interview, Borama, 23 July 2013).

The business administration degree has been the staple faculty and the first to be established across all higher education providers. As a result, a large number of university students who have graduated since the emergence of the higher education sector in 1998 have done so with a business administration degree. Of the 625 graduates traced in this study, 54 percent had obtained this degree (see Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1: Distribution of graduates by the top five fields of study

Faculty	Proportion of graduates (%) (N=625)
Business Administration	54%
ICT (incl. computer science)	11%
Engineering (civil and telecommunications)	10%
Sharia Law (incl. Islamic studies)	8%
Education (teacher training for primary or secondary school subjects)	6%

Source: Field data. These data represent graduates from the 2008 to 2012 cohorts. The proportions do not add up to 100 percent as only the top five faculties are presented in the table.

The focus on courses such as business administration that do not require heavy initial investment is not unique to Somaliland and is a trend seen in private universities across other countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Varghese, 2006). As a result, graduates from related fields tend to comprise the biggest proportion of graduates. In 2005, graduates from the humanities/social sciences and education fields represented 47 and 22 percent of all graduates, respectively (WB, 2009b, p. 47).

As the number of new graduates entering the labour market rises each year (on average about 2,000 students graduate each year in Hargeisa alone; see Chapter 7), students strive to find ways to differentiate themselves. Graduating with a degree that not many other graduates have is one approach. While in the early years of the evolution of the higher education sector students had limited choices as the majority of universities offered only a few courses, the rise in the number of different courses (see Table 6.2 below) now allows students to be more selective.

Discussions with employers about their recruitment practices reveal that prospective students being selective in course choices is a strategy with merit. Given the large number of applications employers receive when they advertise for a single position, it is not uncommon for them to come up with a range of ways to sift through applications forms. A degree type can be used as a filtering tool. The quote below from a discussion with a recruitment officer working for a donor agency clarifies this.

We received hundreds of applications and I thought how could I go through them all? They all have university degrees! But then I noticed that the majority of them had business administration degrees so I started selecting only those who had other degrees. I didn't care what these other degrees were. I just needed a way of cutting down the number of application forms. [...] I ended up with one guy who had a law degree (interview, Hargeisa, 19 August 2013).

A vital point to note here is that since starting a new course can be a financial burden, institutions at times find other creative ways to establish new courses. Gollis University, for instance, combined two widely offered courses, business administration and ICT, to create a hybrid degree called ‘information and management science’. Although this is not a new course *per se* and Gollis University did not have to invest in developing a new course, it is marketed as being new. For prospective students, graduating with this degree is better than graduating with either of the two separate degrees.

The findings of this research suggest that the rush to create new courses can at times mean that universities are compelled to start offering these courses without having the required infrastructure in place. For instance, when demand for civil engineering degrees erupted in 2010, most universities quickly started to offer the course even though all lacked the required laboratory facilities for practical training. This deficiency meant that students only learnt about theoretical materials.

It would be incorrect to assume, however, that the situation is the same for all universities. For example, the rapid growth of Gollis (see Chapter 4) has meant that the university has managed to obtain financial flexibility to start investing in its facilities. At the time of this research, Gollis was waiting for a delivery from India of equipment for its engineering faculty laboratory worth approximately USD 50,000.

In addition to establishing brand-new courses that no other university is offering, universities are also pressured into offering *all* courses that other universities in their immediate locales are offering. This is done to erode any potential reasons students might have for choosing a different university in the same locale. Similar to establishing brand-new courses, adhering to this can result in universities becoming too ambitious and implementing courses that they do not have capacity to provide. It also means that universities stretch themselves too thinly and consequently fail to address issues of quality. In addition, offering too many courses also means universities do not have an opportunity to build their expertise in specific fields. Below is an excerpt from a discussion with an official at Gollis University (interview, Hargeisa, 5 September 2013).

Interviewer: I see you are advertising quite a few new social sciences courses for 2014. I thought your focus was going to be on natural sciences, such as engineering and medicine?

Gollis official: Yes, but we want to do everything.

Interviewer: Would it not be better to specialise in one area and really build your expertise there?

Gollis official: We can do that. But, what is important now is for us to grow and to grow we need students and to get students we need to teach everything.

The drive to offer new courses before other universities do, as well as to offer all courses that other universities are offering, has meant that the number of courses offered by universities in Somaliland has expanded drastically from the early years of the sector. For instance, Amoud University started with two faculties—business administration and education—in 1998, and by 2013 the university had fourteen faculties. The increase in the number of courses is accompanied by an increase in the diversity and complexity of the faculties. For example, the faculty of agriculture at Amoud constitutes eight departments dealing with animal husbandry, agronomy, agricultural economics, rural sociology, horticulture, crop protection, agricultural engineering and technology, and aquatic development.

Table 6.2 below outlines the courses offered during the 2013–2014 academic year by the universities that are included in this research. It is important to note that the picture presented here should only be seen as transitory. As new degree programmes are added, it is not unusual for old ones to be discontinued. At the same time, cosmetic changes to the names of degree courses are frequent and widespread, making it extremely difficult to differentiate new courses from old ones.

Table 6.2: Fields of study at Somaliland universities

University	Courses as of 2013–2014
Amoud	Business and public administration (streams: business administration, management and accounting, public administration, project management); education; health sciences (streams: medicine and surgery, nursing, dental, pharmacy, laboratory technology, anaesthesia); sharia and law; agriculture and environment; computing and ICT; economics and political science; civil engineering

UoH	Business and economics (streams: accounting, finance, management, public administration, economics); health sciences (streams: medicine and surgery, nursing, midwifery, dental, ophthalmology); engineering (streams: civil, electric, telecommunications); computer science; agriculture and veterinary; applied science (streams: biomedical, environmental, nutrition and food sciences); mathematics and statistics; law; education; social sciences (stream: social work)
UoB	Medicine and nursing; community development; education; animal sciences and agriculture (streams: veterinary medicine, agriculture); business (streams: management, economics); ICT; sharia and law
Gollis	Business (streams: administration, accounting, economics, business, information technology); engineering (streams: civil, telecommunications, computers); medicine and allied health (streams: general medicine, public health, anaesthesia, laboratory, nutrition); social and behavioural studies (streams: social science studies, international relations and political science, development studies); agriculture; education; geology; languages; veterinary
Eelo	Computer science; engineering (streams: civil, telecommunications); management science; geology; agriculture; natural sciences
Alpha	Accounting; business management; computer science; law; management and information science; development studies; engineering (streams: civil, telecommunications); livestock assistant; political science; public health; social work; rural development management; urban development management; economics; development and management; educational planning and management; procurement and supplies management
Admas	Engineering (streams: architecture, urban planning); social sciences (streams: sociology and social work, political science and international relations, development studies); education (streams: educational planning, development); economics; informatics (a variant of ICT); business (streams: management, marketing, accounting, finance)

Source: Field data.

The discussion above points out that factors shaping institutions' decisions to establish courses are mainly influenced by the need to attract students and enhance the financial viability of institutions. Critical questions such as the capacity of universities to offer these diverse and complex courses, though pertinent, do not feature prominently in these decisions. Further, questions about the relevance of these courses to the local economy also receive little attention. However, officials at universities in Somaliland are not oblivious to this state of affairs and, as the excerpt below from an interview with the vice chancellor (VC) of the UoB illustrates, some universities aspire to consider the local community and local economy when deciding which courses to offer.

At the moment we are driven by what students want or by what we think students want. But we want to move away from the demands of students to the demands of the community. We want to establish courses that are needed by the local community and are related to the local economy. Think about the Burao economy. We produce a lot of honey, but we export raw honey out of the country. This

honey comes back to Burao, diluted and very expensive. Why not process this honey here and exploit local demand, as well as export when it is [...] processed? The university needs to move to these areas. [It] needs to connect itself to the local production systems (interview, Burao, 22 September 2013).

6.3.1.3 *Recruiting foreign academic staff*

The recruitment of foreign academic staff is another strategy that universities utilise to attract students. Normally, universities tend to recruit teachers from the pool of graduates, mainly from the same university, but also from other institutions. These graduates are employed to teach courses in the faculty from which they themselves have graduated.⁶⁷ Those who graduate in the first and second places (based on grade point average, GPA) are automatically recruited to teach in their respective faculties.

The prevalence of university graduates working as lecturers makes sense considering that over half the teaching staff across Somaliland universities report having a bachelor's degree. Of the total 1,572 teachers who are reported to have been working in the sector in 2013–2014, 861 (55 percent) report having a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education (NCHE, 2014). Of the remaining teachers, 661 (42 percent) and 50 (3 percent) report having master's and PhD degrees, respectively (ibid.). Similar findings are reported by Thomas Jones (2016). The majority of lecturers are employed on a part-time basis (see Chapter 8).

Although recruiting teachers from outside Somaliland is a costly endeavour, having a large proportion of foreign teachers is a way of strengthening the credibility of an institution with regard to its capacity to offer high-quality courses. It is also a way for an institution to differentiate itself from other universities and attract more students. Universities in Somaliland thus seek to recruit teachers from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia in particular. Although fewer in number, there are also teachers from other parts of Africa, such as Cameroon and from places further afield, such as Europe, North America, India, and Bangladesh.

Widely held perceptions on the ground, especially among the student population, that foreign teachers are better qualified than local teachers (who are mainly recent graduates) has meant that the presence of foreign teachers at an

⁶⁷ For example, the business faculty at the UoB is entirely made up of graduates from that faculty.

institution acts as an endorsement for the quality of the courses being offered. Not all foreign teachers, however, are seen as alike in terms of their presumed level of qualifications and thus the perceived expertise they bring to an institution. Informal discussions with university students reveal that European and American teachers are seen as being more qualified than teachers from other countries. The hierarchy is quite remarkable. For example, while teachers from India or Bangladesh are considered less qualified compared to their American and European counterparts, they are still perceived as being better qualified than teachers from African countries. In terms of local (Somali) teachers, those trained outside Africa (i.e., the diaspora) are also considered better than those trained on the continent. Though costly, having some foreign teachers, especially those considered highly qualified, can thus significantly raise a university's reputation and consequently the number of new students it attracts.

It is worth noting that although the recruitment of foreign teachers is an imperative approach to improving the credibility of an institution, this has also been applied in the past to overcome the significant shortage of qualified academic staff—a legacy of the war and the emigration trends dating back to the pre-war period of the 1970s (see Chapter 4). However, as the number of graduates continues to grow and universities mostly recruit from the pool of graduates (see Chapter 8), employing foreign teachers has become a way of increasing the credibility of the institution and consequently a way of attracting prospective students. Employing foreign teachers is, however, costly and only a few of the large universities are able to afford it.

6.3.1.4 *Forging affiliation relationships with foreign institutions*

Similar to recruiting foreign teachers, forging relationships with foreign institutions is another route for universities in the country to improve their reputation and thus attract prospective students. Forming affiliation relationships with foreign universities, either through the hosting or joint offering of specific courses, also allows universities in Somaliland to differentiate themselves from other universities offering similar courses.

Building relations with foreign institutions can mean that a university in Somaliland benefits from having foreign instructors on its campus, which in turn

further bolsters its credibility. This can be seen in the case of the affiliation relationship that Amoud University and the UoH have forged with the King's College London Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) project for their medicine and surgery faculties.⁶⁸ This relationship has resulted in the medical degrees being offered by Amoud University and the UoH to be the most respected in Somaliland, with the periodic presence of foreign academic staff on the Amoud and Hargeisa campuses being another positive.

For community and local independent universities, this avenue is also significant for attracting students as it can overcome the ambiguity associated with the recognition of their degree certificates. In contrast to regional franchise universities, which guarantee that degree certificates for students in Somaliland are issued by the parent institutions in Kenya, Uganda, or Ethiopia, community and local independent universities are not able to offer such promises (see Chapter 4). However, if a community or local independent university is able to form a relationship with a foreign university—in particular, a type of affiliation whereby the institution in Somaliland merely hosts the programme—then students taking the specific course are able to receive certificates from the foreign institution.

The discussion so far focuses on the strategies that universities use to increase the number of prospective students. Although finding ways to grow the number of students is the principal method used because student fees form the financial backbone of institutions, this study observes that universities also employ a number of complementary strategies. This is where discussion now turns.

6.3.2 Mobilising funds through the diaspora and local elites

Reaching out to local elites (such as business persons), as well as members of the diaspora originating from areas where universities are located, is a route through which universities seek to improve their financial situations. This strategy, however,

⁶⁸ In 2000, representatives from King's College Hospital in London visited Somaliland on a fact-finding mission funded by the THET. This trip led to the creation of King's THET Somaliland Partnership in 2004. Through this partnership, King's College provides material and non-material support to the medicine faculties of both the UoH and Amoud University. Through this partnership, a number of volunteer clinical teachers have been in Somaliland and taught at both universities on short-term assignments. According to King's College, since 2002, over 116 clinical volunteers (including doctors, nurses, midwives, psychologists, occupational therapists, hospital managers, and researchers) have been to Somaliland on over 290 teaching trips (King's College, n.d.).

is exercised mostly by community universities. These universities are owned by local communities and thus local elites within these communities, as well as members of the diaspora linked to these communities (via kinship relations; see Chapter 2), have a stake in the universities. They have also played a crucial role in the establishment of community universities (see Chapter 4).

To reach out to members of the diaspora, some community universities, such as Amoud, have established university foundations—non-profit organisations entirely tasked with fundraising on the behalf of the university. These foundations actively reach out to diaspora groups located in different countries to solicit support for the universities.

It is also common for university presidents to travel abroad to drum up funds from members of the diaspora. In 2013, for example, the VC of the UoB went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Europe to approach members of the Burao diaspora. Although he managed to get some funds and equipment for the university, the VC notes that asking diaspora members for funds was not an easy task. The Burao diaspora in these locations also support a number of other development projects on the ground, such as the rehabilitation of an airport in Burao and the construction of a new road between Hargeisa and Burao through Oodweyne—a road that is expected to halve the current journey time between Burao and Hargeisa.

The president of the UoH embarked on a similar trip in 2014. He visited prominent members of the Somaliland diaspora residing in the Gulf States and the UAE to explore funding opportunities. He notes that one of the outcomes of this expedition was the recognition that, similar to Amoud, the UoH also needed to create a non-profit charity-based foundation to fundraise on the behalf of the university and champion its cause (UoH, 2014).

Although members of the diaspora are an imperative source of financing during the establishment of community universities, for the most part this support is one-off rather than continual. A faculty member at the UoB reflects on the dwindling support from the diaspora.

It is not really diaspora fatigue. It is easier to mobilise funds to establish a university than to maintain one. When establishing

something new, the diaspora is excited that [it is] making a difference to [its] community at home. But once the university is already there, the excitement dies down. The diaspora moves onto other new projects like the local airport and roads. These are now the new exciting projects the diaspora [is] supporting. The university it is not so exciting anymore (interview, Burao, 21 September 2013).

In addition to reaching out to the diaspora, community universities exploit local connections to raise funds. University management often approaches local wealthy individuals with connections (mostly kinship connections, but not exclusively) to the region where the university is located. It is not out of the ordinary for large businesses in Somaliland to support community universities either financially or by improving facilities. Telesom, a large telecommunications company in Somaliland, for example, has backed the construction of buildings at the UoH. Dahabshiil, the largest money transfer company in the country, has carried out similar initiatives.

It is important to note that the reputation of an institution, in particular the reputation of its head, determines the relative success of mobilising local funds. For example, the respect accorded to Professor Suleiman (see Chapter 5) means that Amoud University is more likely to receive assistance from businesspeople across Somaliland than any other university in the country. This is a trend that counters support through kinship connections.

When we go to Hargeisa to ask private businesses for assistance, they give [it to] us because we are highly respected. In fact, we receive more private financial support from Hargeisa than from Borama (interview with Professor Suleiman, president of Amoud University, Borama, 27 July 2013).

6.3.3 Mobilising funds through donor agencies

Partnering with donor agencies in a wide range of projects is also a vital source of funding for universities in Somaliland. In 2013, Amoud, for instance, was involved in a number of projects funded by agencies linked to the international aid and development sector. Other universities such as the UoH and the UoB were also

involved in donor-funded projects, such as SCOTTPS (a project called ‘Strengthening Capacity of Teacher Training in Primary and Secondary Education’).⁶⁹

Being involved in donor projects, especially recurring projects such as SCOTTPS, means universities can gain major financial revenue. These projects can also provide a lifeline for a university. For example, in the early years of its establishment (from 2004 onwards), the UoB was almost on the verge of collapsing—it had not been able to pay its staff for a number of months and was operating its key faculty, veterinary, without any qualified staff (interview with a faculty member, Burao, 21 September 2013). The involvement of this university with the earlier phase of the SCOTTPS project (referred to then as SCOTT, a project called ‘Strengthening the Capacity of Teacher Training’) allowed the university to avoid closure, pay its staff, and recruit three qualified teachers for its veterinary faculty from Sudan (interview with a faculty member, Burao, 21 September 2013).

In addition to donor-funded projects such as SCOTTPS, universities also partner with donor agencies on short-term research projects. Due to the large number of donor agencies working in Somaliland (and the wider Somali region), universities in Somaliland have established research centres that are specifically geared towards providing consultancy services to research projects funded and designed by these agencies. In these research projects, the role that academics from universities in Somaliland play is chiefly that of supporting the lead consultant (normally a foreigner brought into Somaliland by the donor agency). Although these academics are often involved in the design of the methodology for data collection (mostly through the utilisation of university students as enumerators), they tend not to have the power to alter the key research questions.

Donor-led research is also often the only avenue through which academic staff in Somaliland can be involved in research activities. When these projects are completed, it is not uncommon for research centres at universities to shut their doors. Donor-funded and led research in Somaliland is mostly designed to gather information about existing or prospective donor projects in the country and thus

⁶⁹ SCOTTPS is a European Union-funded project implemented by a consortium of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (SCOTTPS, n.d.).

entails finding answers to problems defined by donor agents, with the information generated largely filtering back to these agencies. Regardless of their shortcomings, however, these research opportunities nonetheless provide an important space for knowledge transfer and learning between the external lead consultants and academics in Somaliland.

The low level of research activities carried out by universities is not a problem unique to Somaliland. Although experiences differ, many countries in the SSA region lag behind in research output, especially in the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which are all indispensable for promoting development (see Chapter 3).

Apart from finding ways to access funds from donor agencies working in the country, universities in Somaliland have been active in applying for funds directly from multilateral agencies, such as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and other agencies outside Somaliland. In 2013, the UoH, for instance, employed a full-time consultant whose main role was to write proposals to apply for different funds for which the university qualified, taking into account Somaliland's lack of international recognition. As an incentive, for each successful application, the consultant was guaranteed a certain percentage of the money received.

To improve their chances of accessing funds from external agencies, universities exploit a number of specific tactics. For example, during his visit to the UAE to raise funds from the Somaliland diaspora, the president of the UoH notes that he was advised by the diaspora that it might be easier for the university to access funds from agencies within the UAE region if it established an institute of Islamic and Arabic studies at the university, which it promptly did (UoH, 2014).

Furthermore, the university was also advised to include in its application wider issues such as graduate unemployment and the potential danger of recruitment of these unemployed graduates to radical jihadist groups operating in the region (e.g., Al-Shabaab). Emphasising the threat these groups pose to security not only in the Horn and the East Africa region, but also further afield (including in the UAE) would improve the likelihood of attracting funds from agencies located in the UAE.

6.3.4 Other creative ways of raising funds

In comparison to community universities, fundraising avenues available for non-community universities in regional franchise or local independent arrangements—beyond those related to boosting the number of students as are described above—are much narrower. These universities are not able to mobilise local or diaspora support to the extent that community universities can. They are also generally excluded from participating in the lucrative donor-funded projects that are traditionally assigned to community universities.

Nonetheless, there are other strategies that non-community universities employ to improve their financial situations. A key one observed during this study is the diversification of income-earning avenues so that a university can be bailed out during periods of financial difficulty. Ranges of alternative businesses have been established to this end. The owners of Admas University, for instance, opened a restaurant to sustain the university; however, it was unprofitable and eventually closed down (interview with a faculty member, Hargeisa, 5 June 2013). Alpha University opened a primary school in 2012-13, which at the time of this research was still operating. The need to diversify business interests is expressed in the excerpt below.

I don't think all of us [the fifteen universities in Hargeisa] will survive in the next five years. The costs are high. [...] Rent for the building is expensive and teachers are expensive. I have to pay USD 3,850 for rent each month. I also pay USD 130 for twelve hours of teaching per month.⁷⁰ [The] university cannot sustain itself for now. I have to find other resources to cover the costs. [...] I've now started a primary school. [A] primary school is a profitable business and demand is very high. The running costs are also low. For USD 100 per month, my university students teach at the primary school in the morning and study in the afternoon. [...] Of course this is a short-term strategy. But, since the sector is now very competitive, you only need to find a way to survive for the next three years, then you will most likely be the only surviving university (interview with the owner of Alpha University College, Hargeisa, 22 August 2013).

⁷⁰ The university had sixty-four teaching staff members at the time.

6.4 Emphasis on Recruitment Rather Than Retention of Students

The discussion in this chapter so far focused on the strategies universities in Somaliland implement to improve their financial bases. Although multiple methods are observed, finding ways to attract students is found to be the main strategy utilised by all universities examined in this study. One pivotal implication of this strategy is that universities become entirely focused on increasing the number of new students and completely overlook issues surrounding the retention of existing students.

During the course of this research, it became evident that the number of first year entries across all researched universities is significantly higher compared to the number of students who graduate from the respective cohorts (see Table 6.3 below). Finding exactly why such a disparity exists proves difficult, as universities tend to not keep these data. Using data collected from Admas in Hargeisa, Table 6.3 below presents a crude comparison of the number of first year enrolments from 2006 to 2009 and the total number of students who graduated from each yearly cohort (at Admas, students normally graduate in three years).

Table 6.3: Initial enrolments vs. graduates at Admas University College

Year and number of initial enrolments	Year of graduation and number of graduates from each cohort	Number and percentage of those who did not graduate
2006 = 442	2009 = 233	209 (47%)
2007 = 612	2010 = 111	501 (82%)
2008 = 910	2011 = 263	647 (71%)
2009 = 1,388	2012 = 424	964 (69%)

Source: Field data.

Although the above table only shows the number of students who did not graduate, it is a good indication of the number of students who dropped out. There are two main reasons for this. First, as universities in Somaliland operate different term systems and, as in 2013, universities did not have formal transfer agreements (discussed below), it is highly unlikely that students who did not graduate from Admas had transferred to another university. In fact, transfers between universities are unusual, especially as course contents and formats (e.g., the number of credit hours) tend to vary, even if the names of the courses are the same.

Second, while it is plausible that a number of students who did not graduate could have repeated a year or more, conversations with the university's vice president

of academic affairs suggest that although the university operated a minimum GPA threshold for progression from one year to another, incidences of repetitions are very rare (interviews, Hargeisa, June 2013). Given the social connotations associated with failing or repeating a year, students are more likely to drop out than to repeat a year.

The example of Admas University highlights the severity of dropout rates in the higher education sector in Somaliland. This problem is not limited to Admas. Although universities do not keep data on dropout rates, anecdotal evidence suggests a large number of students from all the universities researched for this study who start their studies do not graduate. Discussions with university officials and students suggest numerous reasons why students dropout. Lack of fees, addiction to *khat* (a stimulant widely used in the Horn of Africa),⁷¹ and going on *tahriib* (a hugely popular journey young people in Somaliland take to reach Europe via the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea) are among the most frequently reported motivations compelling students to dropout.

Although dropout rates are high, it is strange that this is not mentioned by any of the officials from all researched universities when asked about the key challenges they face. There is a puzzle here. If universities derive a large proportion of their finances from student fees, surely high dropout rates would have an implication on their bottom line? Without having data on these trends, such as when students are likely to drop out, it is difficult to hypothesise why dropouts do not seem to impact universities to the extent that might be expected. However, this very reason—the high dropout rates—might explain why universities in Somaliland focus almost entirely on recruiting new students each year.

Furthermore, it is also puzzling as to why students and parents are not raising dropout as an issue that universities and the CHE should address. In fact, as noted above, the three frequently mentioned reasons behind dropouts place the responsibility for dropping out squarely on the shoulders of the students who have dropped out and not the universities. This lack of accountability has to a large extent

⁷¹ Khat (*Catha edulis*) is a flowering plant native to the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Within the Somali community, khat chewing plays important social and economic roles. The plant is, however, highly addictive. Since it is often chewed for hours on end, individuals who chew it on a daily basis are unable to be involved in other activities, such as going to university or to work.

removed any pressure from universities to address the issue or keep track of the number of students who dropout each year.

The lack of interest to high dropout levels by universities also raises important questions about whether universities have genuine commitment to social responsibility or whether they are purely driven by profit-making. Although officials from all researched universities argue that they were not only motivated by profit, but also by their commitment to the development of Somaliland (see Chapter 4), their complete silence on the dropout issue challenges the latter. If profit-making is the key driving motivation, then assumptions that the activities of these universities are geared towards positive development outcomes become questionable.

6.5 Competition and Its Implications

As institutional financial sustainability depends almost entirely on student fees and thus on the number of students recruited each year, universities in Somaliland consequently vie aggressively for students. The sector is highly competitive, especially in Hargeisa. Although competition is healthy and can lead to sector improvements, it can also have severe negative implications, particularly for students.

Since the sector developed in a completely laissez-faire environment (at least until 2011), universities themselves decided on the structure and format of their courses. For example, they determined whether they wanted to operate a three-term-per-year system, which allows their students to graduate in three years, or a semester system, with students graduating in four years. In fact, some universities have established the three-term/three-year system to attract students who want to graduate quickly.

In addition to differing term systems, universities also implement various formats with regard to the number of credit hours students need to accumulate in order to graduate. In effect, although universities offer similar courses, the content of these courses and the credit hours they earn can vary significantly. At the time of this research, there had not been any attempt by universities or the CHE to establish common structures.

One crucial implication of differing systems and formats is that students are constrained in their ability to transfer from one university to another. This is exacerbated by the fact that universities, especially those in the same locales, see themselves as competitors and tend not to cooperate with each other, even in matters relating to student support. In fact, until 2013, there were no formal transfer agreements between universities in Hargeisa. Since the state, through the CHE, is still unable to effectively implement its authority in the sector (see Chapter 5), students continue to bear the brunt of this disarray.⁷²

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that a critical understanding of how universities operate—and the extent to which their activities are aligned with the theoretical expectations of a university's role in development—requires an analysis of the structures and strategies institutions use to boost their financial resources. If universities depend almost entirely on student fees for their sustainability, then factors shaping teaching activities are inevitably intricately tied to and influenced by strategies to increase the number of students, especially in an environment where fees are rigid. Furthermore, since research activities depend on the financial flexibility of institutions, universities in Somaliland mainly tend to be teaching universities.

The next chapter begins the analysis of the demand side of the higher education sector in Somaliland. The chapter focuses on drivers of demand for university education in the country.

⁷² It is important to note that the lack of coordination between universities with differing systems and formats is not unique to Somaliland. A 2008 World Bank study finds that the absence of mutually accepted credit transfer systems between higher education institutions in the region restricts the mobility of students (Ng'ethe et al., 2008).

Chapter 7: Drivers of Demand for Higher Education

7.1 Introduction

The discussion in the previous chapter challenges conventional assumptions widely associated with how higher education institutions function. In particular, that chapter examines the presumptions that teaching and research activities are the core functions of universities and that these activities are inherently geared towards the production of knowledge and skilled human resources—mechanisms connecting higher education to positive development outcomes (also see Chapter 3). How universities function in reality in a context such as Somaliland is determined by the structure and main source of their finances. If student fees form the financial backbone of the institutions, and if fees are inelastic, then the core activities of institutions are largely shaped by strategies to attract students. These strategies do not always align with those linked to the creation and dissemination of knowledge or skilled labour.

This chapter moves the discussion to the demand side of the higher education sector in Somaliland. The main objective of the chapter is to identify key drivers of demand for university education. The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part analyses the profile of university students. This section sheds light on the characteristics of those individuals who pursue a university education and provides background for subsequent discussion.

The second part of this chapter analyses key drivers of demand. Guided by the system of provision (SOP) approach, findings in this chapter indicate that although the hope for better employment outcomes is reported by graduates to have been an important motivation, the culturally constructed meanings associated with higher education, such as the linkages between this level of education to improved social status and standing, is also crucial. Furthermore, given the high levels of unemployment among the working age population, and particularly in the youth population (ILO, 2013a), not having something else to do is also reported to have been a factor behind the demand for university education. This highlights the increased utilisation of university education as a suitable alternative for productive employment.

The chapter utilises data collected from 625 traced university graduates who were asked to recall factors that had propelled them to pursue university education (see the methodology section in Chapter 1 for details on how this data was collected). The 625 graduates consist of 79 percent male and 21 percent female respondents. Notwithstanding issues associated with the recollection of past information, the data collected from these graduates provide important insights into drivers of demand for university education in the Somaliland context.

7.2 Growing Demand

In 1998 when Amoud University first opened its doors, the total intake for that year was sixty students. By June 2013, the number of students at Amoud had grown by more than sixty-four times to 3,887 (HIPS, 2013). Across the country, the number of universities increased from one in 1998 to twenty-eight by 2013–2014 and the number of students increased by more than 300 times to 18,223 (HIPS, 2013).⁷³ The majority of these students (approximately 15,000) were registered at five universities in 2012: Hargeisa, Burao, Borama, Gollis, and Nugaal (Gass, 2012). A crude calculation of the tertiary gross enrolment rate reveals that at 5.81 percent, Somaliland is on par or above many countries in the sub-Saharan Africa region (SSA; see Chapter 1).

The rapid growth of enrolment raises two important questions. First, who are the individuals demanding university education? Second, what are the factors compelling these individuals to pursue a university degree?

7.2.1 Profile of university students

Before analysing the motivations for pursuing university education, characteristics of the individuals demanding university education are considered. The profile of the students presented in this section is drawn from direct observation of current students across the campuses of the researched universities, as well as from discussions with universities officials on the profile of students who had attended in previous years.

⁷³ The figure 18,223 represents the total number of students in thirteen universities who were surveyed by the cited report. Not all universities operating in Somaliland in June 2013 were surveyed by this report. However, since the thirteen universities surveyed are the largest universities in the country, the total number of students presented here is a close approximation of the total figure.

For this reason, it is not possible to assign proportions to each student profile that is described below. The study identifies four main profiles for university students.

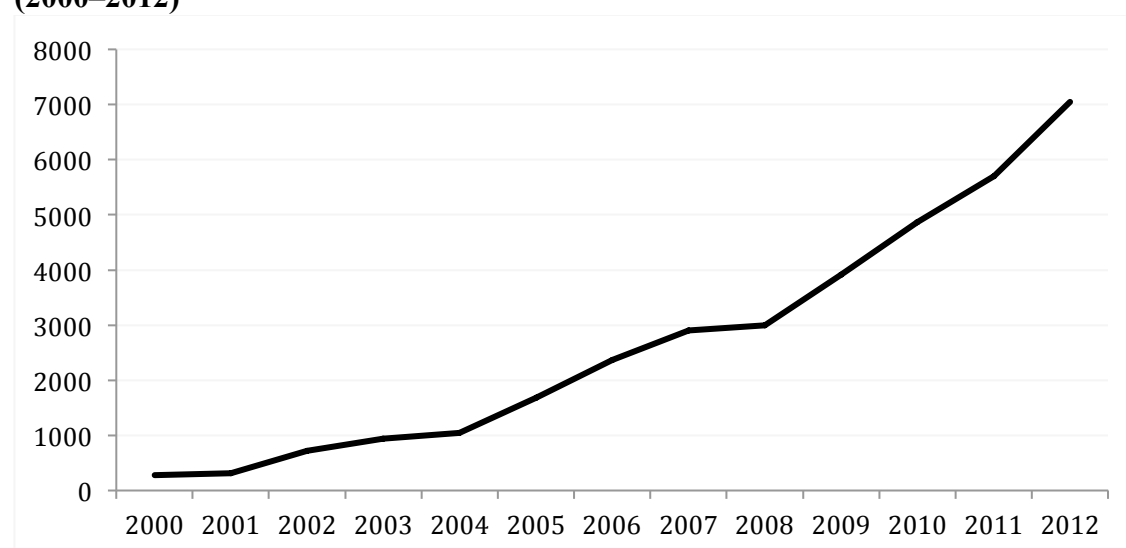
The first profile of university students is directly related to the recent and turbulent history of Somaliland. These students had either finished secondary school prior to the war and did not have opportunities to proceed to university given the deterioration of the education system during the 1980s (see Chapter 2) or had their secondary school interrupted by the war. In the earlier phase of development of university education in the country, the number of these types of students is understandably greater compared to the number found at the time of this study. For its first intake of about sixty students in 1998, Amoud University recruited students who had either graduated from secondary school before the outbreak of the war or those who were in their third or fourth year of secondary school education when the war broke out.

The second profile of students found in universities is a small number of older men and, to a lesser extent, women who did not have an opportunity to study at university level prior to the outbreak of war. These individuals had completed their secondary education in the 1970s and 1980s, but given a number of factors (e.g., limited space and arduous entry requirements to the one university in the country at that time) were not able to progress to higher education. As the higher education sector evolved in post-war Somaliland, and access and flexibility (such as part-time studies) increased, these individuals are gradually returning to pursue higher education.

The third student profile is young people in their early twenties who had graduated from secondary school during the post-war period. This research finds that this group comprises the majority of students on university campuses. This group began to enter universities in increasing numbers from the mid- to late-2000s, when the number of secondary schools started to grow at a faster pace (see Chapter 2). Since the pace of post-war reconstruction activities differed across locales, in some places all three types of students entered universities in large numbers much later than in other areas.

Figure 7.1 below captures the number of secondary school students who passed the national secondary school leaving examination between 2000 and 2012. These data are a good indication of the size of the pool of potential university students. The graph shows that the number of secondary school graduates who have passed the final exam drastically increases from the mid-2000s onward. Since secondary schools are geographically concentrated in the western regions of Somaliland, particularly in the capital Hargeisa (SLMoE, 2012b; SLNECB, 2013), the number of secondary school graduates and thus the size of the pool of prospective university students is larger in Hargeisa than in other regions. For example, in the academic year 2011–2012, close to 40 percent of all secondary school students were located in and around Hargeisa (SLMoP, 2013).

Figure 7.1: Number of students that passed the form four leaving examination (2000–2012)



Source: Table created by author using data obtained from officials at the Somaliland National Examination and Certificate Board, Hargeisa, October 2013.

The fourth profile of university students identified in this study are older civil servants (mostly men). The presence of this group on university campuses is largely triggered by the emphasis placed by the current administration on streamlining and professionalising the civil service since it came into power in 2010. These efforts include the creation of job descriptions, job titles, and criteria for obtaining seniority across different government departments, including the police and the military. One criterion for seniority among military and police personnel, for instance, is having a university degree. This requirement has therefore led to a large number of older civil servants registering at local universities in order to acquire a degree certificate and

thus meet the criteria required for obtaining a certain level of seniority. An interview with the head of Alpha University College in Hargeisa explains this:

Our young students are now studying in the same classroom with people in their fifties and sixties who are working for the government. These men are professionals. People with extensive experience and who have been working in their fields for years. But now they need a university degree to be awarded seniority. [...] For example, in the military, if someone has a degree, they get an additional star. [...] Many of them do not attend regular classes. They say, just call me when it is time to take the exams [...] (interview, Hargeisa, 22 August 2013).

The brief description of the four student profiles above highlights the heterogeneity of individuals pursuing university education. The next section looks briefly at the gender representation on universities campuses.

7.2.2 Women and university education

Prior to the war, access to higher education for women in Somalia as a whole was limited, not only due to the arduous entry requirements and the limited spaces available in the one university in the country, but also due to the lower numbers of female students graduating from secondary schools (MoE, 1985). For women living in the north-western regions (present day Somaliland) access to university was further constrained by the sheer distance to Mogadishu. Social norms restricting women travelling alone and living in cities without their kin acted as a further barrier that restricted their access to higher education.

The significant growth of the university sector in Somaliland and the prevailing flexible entry requirements (see Chapter 6) have largely removed these pre-war access barriers and have widened access for all students, in particular women. Having universities in all major towns in Somaliland also means that women are able to attend university without having to leave their homes or travel unaccompanied for long distances. During the academic year 2012–2013, this study finds that across the six researched universities current female students comprised about 41 percent of the overall student population. This shows that the participation of women in university education is increasing compared to earlier years— CHE reports that by the academic year 2013–2014 female graduates on average comprise a third of all graduates (NCHE, 2014).

Although availability, proximity, and flexible entry requirements are important determinants of access to higher education for female students, it would be incorrect to assume that once these are removed any prospective female student who wishes to attend university in Somaliland is able to do so. There are still crucial constraints restricting access to higher education for female students. One of these constraints corresponds to the wider socio-economic changes that have taken place during the post-war era, which has resulted in the increased participation of women in economic activities.

A key transformation that has taken place in the post-war economy is the significant decline in public sector employment, which was an important source of employment for men in the pre-war era. This change has led to high level of unemployment among men (Gardner and El-Bushra, 2015) and has resulted in an increasing number of women entering the economic sphere and becoming breadwinners for their families (Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013). Daughters in families are crucial for supporting their mothers, either directly through their participation in economic activities or indirectly through taking care of the house and other siblings while the mother is working. The implication here is that the opportunity costs of attending educational institutions in general for female students have increased, making the total cost of attending university particularly high.

There are, however, other constraints facing not only women, but other prospective university students. One of the crucial constraints is affording university fees, given that state provision of higher education does not exist. University fees in 2013–2014 ranged from USD 400 to 750 per annum, an amount that is considered by study respondents to be extremely high. To put this into perspective, in 2012, the average monthly income for a household (a normal household in Somaliland consists of six to seven members) is estimated to be approximately USD 251; this increases to USD 356 for those households receiving remittances from abroad (Hammond, 2013).⁷⁴ It is reported that a large percentage of household income, approximately 73 percent, is spent on food (WB, 2014b).

⁷⁴ The average monthly income figures represent data collected from households located in both rural and urban areas of Somaliland and Puntland.

Since local production of food is limited in Somaliland and the majority of consumed household food is imported, household welfare depends on price movements on imported food. The fact that prices are reported to have been trending upwards since 2009 (*ibid.*) suggests that household purchasing power is gradually falling. This impacts negatively on the available income reserved for other household expenses, such as education. It is reasonable to expect that poor households, compared to their better-off counterparts, would feel the falling purchasing power more sharply, curbing their ability to spend money on education. This point is corroborated by Hammond's (2013) study, which finds that better-off urban households spend considerably more on education and health services compared to poor households. This point raises an important question about whether university education is a privilege only enjoyed by individuals from better-off households. The following analysis of the sources of fees interrogates this question.

7.2.3 Paying for a university education

Understanding how households are able to afford university education is crucial to the analysis of the developmental impact of this sector to the society. Since the direct and indirect costs associated with higher education tend to be relatively high, it is crucial to understand who in Somaliland society has access to this level of education. In the context of the SSA region in general, higher education has always been seen as an elitist preoccupation (Samoff, 1979; Samoff and Carrol, 2003; WB, 1994, 1988). Higher education in the region has had a reputation of being unequal and largely benefiting children from better-off families, thus reproducing the social status quo—a line of argument that is also pursued by social reproduction theorists (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

This perception is key in arguments to reduce public expenditure in the sector, as well as the push towards liberalisation, commercialisation, and privatisation encouraged by donor agencies, mainly the World Bank (WB) from the 1970s (Samoff and Carrol, 2003; WB, 1994, 1988). One primary assumption here is that since the majority of students in universities are from better-off households, the state does not have to subsidise their costs (*ibid.*).

A number of studies, however, find that poor students are negatively impacted by the above changes. Mazrui (1997) argues that in Kenya in 1996, the overwhelming majority of students who were de-registered for not paying the required fees at two public universities were from poor households. Similar trends are found at Makerere, the main public university in Uganda (Musisi and Muwanga, 2003). In Ghana and Tanzania, Morley (2010) finds that students from low socio-economic backgrounds are under-represented in universities. In Mozambique, Chissale (2012) also finds that very few households could afford access to higher education.

The studies above show that socio-economic status is an important factor in determining access to higher education. This is particularly crucial in Somaliland where public provision is non-existent and commercial credit facilities, whereby students might obtain loans, are also non-existent. The question is how do university students in Somaliland afford the fees, especially given large family sizes?

During this research, university graduates were asked how they paid their fees while studying. Table 7.1 below summarises findings. Of the 625 traced graduates from 2008 to 2012, 71 percent note that their relatives located both inside and outside the country paid their university fees. A large number of graduates within this cohort note that it is not just one relative who had paid for their fees throughout their studies. Incidences of multiple relatives paying at different stages of the individual's university education are not uncommon.

Table 7.1: Source of university fees

Who paid your fees?	Proportion of respondents (N=625)
My relatives	71%
Myself or my immediate family	25%
I had a scholarship	4%

Source: Field data.

The heavy involvement of relatives in allowing households to access higher education in Somaliland reflects an important feature of Somali social structure (as discussed in Chapter 2), whereby the sharing of resources works to distribute resources between households in order to allow poor households to overcome consumption constraints—a system of mutual support strategies commonly found in close knit societies (Crivello, 2011).

A quarter of the graduates who were surveyed note that they had paid for their university fees themselves or that an immediate member of their nuclear family (parents or siblings) who either resided in Somaliland or abroad had paid for them. A combination of both (self and support from immediate family) is also reported. However, graduates who had paid their own fees note that they had held jobs during their studies. This study finds that it is common practice for university students to work during their studies. Of the 625 graduates surveyed in this study, 43 percent report to have worked during their studies, with the majority of those working as primary teachers in the education sector (see Chapter 8).

The remaining 4 percent of graduates report that their fees were paid for by scholarships. The main sources of scholarships are from universities, the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private companies, and trust funds set up by different kinship groups. Most universities offer a number of scholarships each year to boost their public image (see Chapter 5). Some universities, such as Amoud, use family discounts; i.e., when three members of the same family attend Amoud University, only two are charged and the third receives a full scholarship.

Although uncommon, private companies such as Telesom, the largest telecommunications company in Somaliland, provide scholarships to needy students as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes. However, it is more common for large private companies to assist universities (mainly community universities) in building or improving university facilities than to offer scholarships to students (see Chapter 6). NGOs and other actors from the international relief and development sector also occasionally provide scholarships. However, these tend to be tied to specific projects and target specific fields of study. For example, through the Rule of Law project,⁷⁵ the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) has been providing scholarships to law faculty students at the University of Hargeisa and Amoud University. This project has made extra efforts to provide at least half of the scholarships to female students.

⁷⁵ Through the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Project, funded by the European Union, UNDP is working with the Ministry of Justice to build a strong and fair justice and legal system by improving the capacities and effectiveness of the courts and the judiciary. The project provides law studies and helps qualified professionals find a job in the justice sector.

The few graduates who report to have had their fees paid for by scholarships from kinship trust funds reflect an emerging and growing trend. During this research, a number of trust funds that provide support to young people belonging to their respective kinship groups for accessing higher education were observed. Members of the diaspora who belong to specific kinship groups often initiate the trust funds and are responsible for deciding how the funds should be used.

One recipient of a kinship trust fund scholarship who was a student at the University of Hargeisa notes in an interview that such groups use a wide range of criteria to offer scholarships. In her case, she was offered the scholarship because she had scored the highest marks (of all girls in Somaliland) in her secondary school leaving examination. Once members of the trust fund had heard of her achievements, they approached her family directly to offer the scholarship. In other cases, scholarships are offered to young people from poor or orphaned households belonging to the respective kinship groups. Although these groups are mostly set up by the diaspora, as a result of visits and the constant flow of information via social media the trust funds are generally well connected to events in Somaliland.

Apart from setting up trust funds, the Somaliland diaspora in general has been crucial in facilitating access to higher education. For graduates who report to have been supported by relatives and immediate family members, slightly more than a third (36 percent) of them note that these relatives reside outside Somaliland. About half of these relatives live in Europe (47 percent), followed by North America (22 percent), the Gulf States and other Arab countries, including those in North Africa (17 percent), countries in the SSA region (10 percent), and Australia and New Zealand (4 percent).

Heavy reliance on relatives for access to higher education re-emphasises the significant level of resource distribution that takes place within communities in Somaliland. To a large extent, this distribution reduces inequalities in access to higher education. However, there are still households that do not have social networks that allow them to access these shared resources. Therefore, there are many students finishing secondary school who are not able to pursue university education because they cannot afford it.

This research finds that in a comparative sample of people who have completed secondary school, but have not had an opportunity to proceed to university (n=112), about 69 percent wished they had gone to university. Lack of finances is noted to be an important factor in their inability to access higher education. Lack of funding is also noted by the *Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development* as one of the main reasons for lack of school attendance for people aged six to twenty-nine years old (UNDP, 2012). Discussion now moves to an analysis of the factors motivating individuals to pursue university education.

7.3 Drivers of Demand

It is now a trend. Every young person wants to go to university and every parent wants his or her sons or daughters to go to university. It doesn't matter what happens afterwards. [...] The fees are not too bad. For example, at Amoud, if you have three children going to university, you only pay for two, the other one attends for free (focus group discussion with mothers of university students, Borama, 24 July 2013).

During the fieldwork phase of this study, 625 graduates were asked to recall the main reasons that motivated them to pursue university education. Taking into account the general problems associated with recalling past information, the responses given are numerous and multifaceted. They reveal that the reasons behind the demand for higher education are complex, multidimensional, and influenced by a range of historical and contemporary factors.

Table 7.2 below captures the three reasons most frequently referred to by both male and female graduates. It is important to note here that since graduates were not given pre-selected reasons, for simplification and ease of presentation, their responses were categorised during the data analysis stage. The drivers of demand identified in the table below are not mutually exclusive. During interviews, graduates often provide more than one reason for attending university.

Table 7.2: Drivers of demand

Drivers	Proportion of respondents (N=625)*
Better employment outcomes after graduation	39%
I wanted to become an educated person and improve my social standing	32%
I did not have anything else to do	21%

Source: Field data. *The total sum of the proportions above does not add to 100 percent because only three most frequently noted responses are presented in this table.

7.3.1 Better employment outcomes after graduation

The finding that 39 percent of the traced graduates were compelled to go to university because they wanted to improve their employment outcomes after graduation shows that a perceived association between higher education and employment outcomes is also observed in Somaliland. The question here is what are the factors behind the formulation of this perception in this particular context? Discussions with graduates suggest that there are specific historical and contemporary factors behind this motivation.

7.3.1.1 *Historical factors: higher education and better employment outcomes*

Similar to experiences in many other countries in SSA, there is a historical precedence for the correlation between university education and better employment outcomes. During the early post-independence period in the 1960s, when Somaliland was part of Somalia, university graduates were in high demand and were guaranteed important posts within government institutions.

Since the Somali National University was not established until 1970, individuals with university degrees in the early post-independence period were those who had been trained outside the country (mainly in Italy and Britain) and were therefore not only highly educated, but could speak the languages of the former colonial administrators. These individuals were seen as crucial to the post-independence drive for modernisation and the Somalisation projects. Given that the number of these individuals was relatively low, demand for them as employees was high in the immediate post-independence era as the state structures grew. This trend continued until the early 1970s, when the introduction of the Somali script in 1972 led

to significant changes in the qualification requirements for civil servants' employment.

Before the introduction of the Somali script, the languages of the former colonial administrators were mainly used as official languages. The introduction of written Somali and its eventual adoption significantly changed the recruitment prerequisites for civil servant posts (Laitin and Samatar, 1987). While knowledge of former colonial languages had hitherto been an essential criterion for obtaining civil servant jobs, replacing them with the Somali language completely overhauled the civil servant recruitment process.

The adoption of Somali as the national language dramatically increased the pool of potential civil servants. Those with higher education found themselves in competition with individuals who had lower levels of education, but were more proficient in the Somali script. Since the state was the biggest employer and opportunities in the private sector were minimal, and given the nationalisation of social and economic infrastructures by the military regime (Nelson and Harold, 1982; Samatar, 1988), it is plausible to hypothesise that the introduction of the Somali script dampened the relative dominance of higher education. This also may have contributed to the erosion, albeit over a period of time, of the correlation between higher education and guaranteed civil servant posts.

The association between higher education and better employment outcomes was weakened further in the late-1970s and even more so during in the 1980s. During this time, the military regime increasingly utilised nepotism to further its agenda. One of the tools the regime used to strengthen its position and solidify its interests was by using civil service recruitment (Abdi, 1998; Africa Watch, 1990; Sheikh Abdi, 1981). Allocating jobs to individuals on the basis of kinship affiliations increasingly became the norm and it was common for highly educated and experienced individuals to be removed from their posts and replaced with individuals with limited experience or education, but belonging to kinship groups closely related to the president (Sheikh Abdi, 1981). Although this type of nepotism extended to other areas of the economy, such as the awarding of business licenses and access to credit (Africa Watch, 1990), its utilisation in the recruitment process for government is likely to have contributed

to the further waning of the correlation between higher education and civil servant posts.

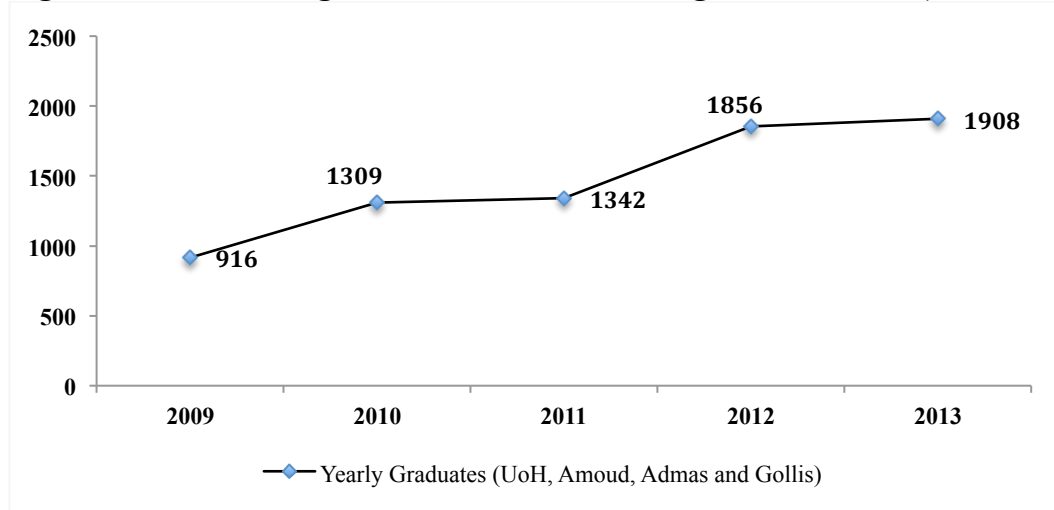
7.3.1.2 *Contemporary Factors: higher education and better employment outcomes*

When Somaliland declared independence on 18 May 1991, the country was suffering from a serious shortage of educated and skilled labour (see Chapter 4). This meant that the qualification requirements for top-level roles in the nascent government institutions were significantly lowered. As a result, an individual who worked as a teacher or a police officer during the pre-war era could find himself or herself elevated to a much more senior position.

Although the lack of qualified human resources was alleviated to some extent by returnees from the diaspora, especially from the late 1990s onward, many people were not staying permanently, but instead revolved between their host or adopted countries and Somaliland (Hansen, 2007). This meant that the shortages of educated workers and thus the high demand for them persisted. Even though the correlation between higher levels of education and better employment outcomes had been dampened in the 1970s and the 1980s, it was reignited in the 1990s during post-war reconstruction efforts in Somaliland.

The situation during the early post-war period in the 1990s differed greatly from that in 2013 with respect to the quantity and relative demand of university-level educated individuals. As the number of universities increased, the number of graduates has also increased. Figure 7.2 below shows the growth in the number of graduates from the four largest universities (University of Hargeisa, Amoud University, Admas University College, and Gollis University) between 2009 and 2013. In 2013 alone, the four universities produced 1,908 graduates.

Figure 7.2: Number of graduates from the four largest universities (2009–2013)



Source: Table created by author. Data from 2009 to 2012 are sourced from *Somaliland in Figures 2013* (SLMoP, 2013). Data for 2013 are collected from the respective institutions during fieldwork (October 2013).

In 2013, the steady increase in the number of graduates triggered concerns that there were far too many university graduates in Somaliland, especially in Hargeisa, where fifteen universities operated. A range of stakeholders (parents, university officials, and graduates) expressed concerns that many of these graduates were unemployed. Conversations with government officials also reveal similar apprehensions that the number of university graduates far outstripped the capacity of the labour markets to absorb them and that the situation was worsening each year as more graduates entered the labour market.

At this time, widespread concerns about graduate unemployment were accompanied by concerns about the quality of education being offered by the many universities in the country, especially as the sector continued to expand in an environment of limited government oversight (see Chapter 5). This perception is illustrated by the preference of employers to hire staff with degrees obtained outside Somaliland, which are perceived to be of superior quality (see Chapter 8).

The perceived low quality of instruction, combined with concerns about limited opportunities after graduation and the preference by employers for foreign degrees, are responsible for the apparent shifts in perceptions about the value of higher education and its association with improved employment outcomes. Increasingly, young people and their families see higher education in Somaliland as something to do while waiting for something else. Studying outside Somaliland, whether in

neighbouring countries or further afield, is also preferred. The excerpt below from a discussion with mothers of university students captures this dilemma.

My elder son recently told me, ‘Mother, I know I’m just starting university, but I really do not see the point. All the older graduates are still sitting on their verandas doing nothing.’ [...] Now my younger son who is finishing secondary school this year has decided that he does not want to study in this country. He said, ‘Only people who study abroad are employed when they come back.’ [...] There is no future in Somaliland (focus group discussion with mothers of university students, Borama, 24 July 2013).

It would be incorrect to assume that the perceived low quality of higher education and limited employment opportunities after graduation discourages demand for this level of education. In fact, even with the prevailing concerns, demand for higher education continues to grow. The discussions below reveal that motivations to attend university also include aspirations to acquire social standing and finding ways to overcome idleness. However, before proceeding to these discussions, it is useful to analyse graduates’ reflections about whether their employment outcomes improve as a result of attaining a university education.

7.3.1.3 *Did having a degree improve employment outcomes?*

During the research, graduates were asked to reflect on whether higher education had improved their employment outcomes after graduation, as they had hoped. An overwhelming number of the 625 traced graduates (84 percent) note that having a university degree did indeed improve their employment outcomes. When asked to explain how, graduates provide numerous answers. The following excerpts capture the major threads in the answers they provide.

The only people that work in this country are those with a university education.

Because university degree gives you the tools you need to work, therefore you get a lot more opportunities compared to a person without a degree.

With a degree, you get a name in the community. This name is what gives you opportunities in the labour market.

They trust you when you have a degree. Then opportunities are 100 percent.

People respect you because you are educated.

The answers above represent two important trends in graduates' perceptions of their employment outcomes after graduation. First, when graduates respond to the question about whether having a university degree had improved their employment outcomes, they tend to reflect less on their direct experiences and more on the widespread perceptions about the benefits of higher education and the prestige associated with it. For example, although an overwhelming 84 percent of the interviewed graduates note that going to university had indeed improved their employment outcomes, the group also includes a large number of graduates who have not had positive employment experiences after graduation. For instance, about 20 percent of the individuals in this group report being unemployed (not involved in any paid or unpaid employment) at the time of data collection and had not managed to secure a job since they graduated from university two or more years previously.

There is a puzzle here. If the employment outcomes for some of these graduates are rather grim, why do they still believe higher education improved their employment outcomes?

It is plausible that since it is widely believed that without a university degree a person cannot even look for a job (see Chapter 8), the fact that these graduates have attained a degree is enough for them to believe that their outcomes have indeed improved. Here, employment outcomes are defined based on the perception that the probability of securing a job is higher when an individual attains a university degree. Having a degree is seen as being better than not having one. Here, the actual fact of having a job is less relevant. In fact, getting a job is believed to be subject to an individual's *nasiib* (luck). What is important, therefore, is that if graduates have *nasiib*, they are more likely to be recruited because they now have a university degree compared to someone without a university degree. Furthermore, this recruitment will most likely be in white-collar jobs that are considered proper and suitable for an educated person (see Chapter 8).

During discussions with graduates, it also becomes evident that graduates cannot separate the wider social benefits associated with higher education from the strict economic benefits of higher education. When asked to reflect on whether their employment outcomes had improved as a result of attaining a university degree, there is a tendency for graduates to refer to the social benefits of education, such as getting respect, a name, and trust from the community. For some respondents, these social benefits seem to be more important than employment *per se* as a core outcome for which to strive. However, since finding employment in the Somaliland context is closely linked to an individual's social connections, the social benefits of education cannot realistically be divorced from its economic benefits (see Chapter 8).

In this section, it is noted that although 39 percent of graduates recall that they had pursued higher education because they wanted to improve their employment outcomes, the association between higher education and better employment is not purely formulated on the rate of return (ROR) analysis. Historical and contemporary factors continue to influence how people perceive this correlation. Furthermore, this association is also not based on realistic expectations of future returns. In fact, the wider social benefits of higher education are often provided as explanations for how postgraduate employment outcomes have improved. The next section moves discussion to the second most frequently noted motivation for pursuing a university education.

7.3.2 'I wanted to become an educated person and improve my social standing'

When 32 percent of the graduates interviewed note that one of the motivations that propelled them to attend university was their desire to become educated individuals and raise their social standing, an obvious question to ask is what they mean by being educated and how being educated is related to improving one's social standing. As such, graduates were asked to clarify what they mean by being educated. The answers they provide are numerous and contain a myriad of meaning for the idea of being 'educated'. This makes it difficult to pinpoint an exact meaning for the definition of an educated individual.

The person who is educated and the one who is not, they do not think the same. The person who is educated can mix with anyone in the community, but the person who has not studied cannot do this.

When you are educated, you are respected in the community. Your own family also respects you.

When you are educated your value in the community increases.

An educated person is listened to when he speaks. People trust him.

An educated person has a name in the community.

When you are educated, your marriage prospects improve. Now that I'm an engineer, women want to marry me, even though I do not have a job.

During conversations with both male and female graduates, a number of specific words are frequently used to either describe the characteristics of an educated individual or how this individual is perceived in the community. Words such as '*ixtiraam*', '*kalsooni*', '*qaddarin*', and '*magac*' are frequently used to describe how an educated individual is respected, trusted, valued, and has a name in society (respectively, as translated from Somali to English). An educated individual is also described as possessing certain characteristics, which are expressed in words such as '*sumcad*', '*sharaf*', and '*akhlaaq wanaag*'—words associated with having a good reputation, dignity and behaviour (respectively).

What is obvious from the above is that the concept of an 'educated' individual is not one that can easily be defined as it involves a lot more than a mere association with what is learned at an educational institution, in this case, at university. It is also a concept that encompasses a wide range of descriptive meanings that are in many ways context specific (Barrow and Woods, 2006; Peters, 1966). However, the description of an educated individual can also be unclear. For example, if the attributes associated with an 'educated' individual in Somaliland are examined, these attributes are rather general and are also found in individuals who have not gone to university; namely having a good reputation, dignity, or behaviour. In Somaliland society, these are not attributes exclusively accorded to university-educated individuals.

What the above responses also show is that the perceived value of university education is not limited to those associated with economic outcomes. These findings reiterate the point that investment in education cannot be perceived as similar to investment in physical capital, as prescribed by human capital theory. People attach specific meanings to education that are historically and culturally specific (Fine, 2002,

1998). These meanings play a crucial role in shaping their decisions to pursue education.

The question here, though, is how the correlation between education and the above attributes have come about in the Somaliland context. Moreover, has education always been a route to achieving such standing in this society? To understand these questions, it is imperative to briefly discuss how social standing or status is generally achieved in Somali society.

7.3.2.1 *Education and social status in Somali society*

Similar to many other African societies, there are specific and distinct ways through which men and women achieve status in Somali society. Traditionally, a Somali man, for example, achieves status through his knowledge and wisdom, his poetic and oratory capabilities, his bravery in war, and his hospitality and wealth (Mohamed, 2007).

As Somali is a highly patriarchal society, how women traditionally achieve status is often tied to men. Women achieve status by being the caregivers of their households and by being associated with their father, their husbands, or their children, and on some occasions, with their kinship groups, especially during peace negotiations, when it is common for women to be exchanged in efforts to build long-term relations between rival groups and solidify peace settlements (Kapteijns, 1994; Lewis, 1959, 1967, 1961). However, it is also the case that women can achieve status independently by being modest, shy, or religious. Being knowledgeable in religious matters, for example, is largely associated with the agency of women and is less tied to men.

How men and women achieve status in the Somali context has not remained constant over time. As Somali society goes through different social changes, triggered by changes in the wider socio-economic environment, ways through which men and women achieve status have also been changing (Kapteijns, 1994). For example, while some activities, such as bravery in war and raiding livestock, were important in achieving status for men during pre-colonial Somali society, the introduction of the modern state during the colonial era, and with it rules that controlled and prohibited

certain actions, meant that these old activities became obsolete.⁷⁶ In their place, however, new forms of acquiring status associated with access to state resources became predominant (ibid.).

The role of education in acquiring social standing has, however, been a persistent feature in Somali society, dating back to the pre-colonial era. Educated individuals have always attained high social standing in Somali society. A common Somali saying, *Aqoon la'an waa iftiin la'an* (lack of knowledge is darkness), perhaps best captures the importance of being knowledgeable in the Somali context. The importance of knowledge is also related to religious beliefs and customs. As Somalis are overwhelmingly Muslim and have been exposed to Islam since as far back as the 8th century, the belief that seeking knowledge is a duty which falls upon each Muslim has deep value in Somali society.⁷⁷ However, not all forms of knowledge are deemed equal. For example, parents and religious leaders passionately opposed secular education when it was introduced by the colonial administration (see below).

There are three points about education, or knowledge in the wider sense, and status in the Somali context that are worth noting. First, the relative value accorded to a certain type of knowledge has always depended on its relevance to the wider society, given the prevailing socio-economic environment. A highly valued knowledge today might lose its value in a later period if changes in the socio-economic environment have rendered it less relevant. For instance, although the value accorded to individuals with specific knowledge about transhumant nomadic pastoralism, such as trends in the weather, environment, and livestock health (Cassanelli, 1982) in the community has historically been relatively high, as the Somali nomadic population is gradually decreasing (UNFPA, 2014), this knowledge may lose some of its value. The status accorded to individuals endowed with this type of knowledge residing in an environment where this knowledge is no longer as relevant may also decline over time.

⁷⁶ This appears to have changed, albeit on a temporary basis, during the civil war, where qualities associated with being strong, such *gees* (strong man), *libax* (a lion), or *nin adag* (a hard man), once more gained social currency.

⁷⁷ This is exemplified, for instance, in Hadith number 224, found in The Book of the Sunnah, narrated by Anas bin Malik.

Second, although education has held prominence in Somali society for a long time, the relative importance and value accorded to the different types of knowledge have varied significantly over time. For example, while Islamic knowledge has had a long history, and Islamic scholars (*Wadaado*) have managed to preserve the status and respect accorded to them over long periods of time, western-style secular education has struggled to gain acceptance and value in Somali society (Dawson, 1964; Kakwenzire, 1986; Morah, 2000; Olden, 2008). In the early period, secular education was viewed with suspicion and some attempts by British administrators to implement this form of education led to violent outcomes (*ibid.*).⁷⁸

It was not until the benefits associated with secular education—such as access to employment in the colonial apparatus and later in the Somali state bureaucracy—became visible that the value and status of this type of education rose (Olden, 2008). However, given that the state bureaucracy during and after the colonial era was concentrated in urban areas, it is possible that those residing in urban areas (*reer magal*) recognised this value much earlier than their rural counterparts. Hohne (2010) notes that Somali nomads only sent to secular schools sons who were not particularly gifted at herding-related activities.

Third and relatedly, the relative value accorded to the different types of knowledge crucially depends on the ability of the educated individual to translate their knowledge into tangible benefits, which can be utilised not only to individual benefit, but to the benefit of the wider kin. It is not the knowledge *per se* that is the source of social status, but rather the things this knowledge is able to attain, such as the types of material and non-material access it provides. For example, the realisation that western-style education could lead to employment in the colonial government prompted many households to send some of their children for secular education, in addition to sending them to Quranic schools. Here, the association between western-style education and access to state resources accorded individuals who had received high levels of secular education high positions in Somali society.

⁷⁸ It is important to note here that not all Somalis were against secular education. There are examples suggesting that as early as the 1900s prominent Somali figures, such as Haji Farah Oomar (a Somali prosecutor was educated and resided in Yemen, then Aden), were already pushing for the modernization of Somaliland and with it the provision of secular education (Mohamed, n.d.).

What this means is that the relative importance, relevance, and value associated with specific types of knowledge largely depend on the wider socio-economic environment and the currency associated with a particular type of knowledge. While Islamic scholars continue to command respect and prestige in Somali society, the introduction of state structures and western-style secular education as a means of accessing the resources attached to these structures has, over time, elevated secular education and, by extension, individuals who have benefited from that particular form of education.

A crucial implication for graduates is that although having a university education brings about an improvement to their level of social status, the maintenance of this status requires the translation of university education into employment outcomes. Importantly, these employment outcomes must not only enable the graduate to become economically independent (especially for young men), but must also enable the graduate to fulfil the required social obligations to provide material support to family and kin when needed (see discussion on Somali social structure in Chapter 2). In the long run, then, university education alone is not enough to sustain social status and standing.

7.3.2.2 *University education and Somali youth—‘The only way’ to obtain social standing*

Conversations with young people in Somaliland reveal that they increasingly see university education as *the only way* to obtain social standing in contemporary Somaliland. To understand why this is the case, it is important to consider the position of young people (*dhalinyarada*) in Somaliland society. Although there are numerous age-based categories that are officially used to define who is young or qualifies as a youth in the Somaliland context, in general terms any person who is under the age of thirty and is yet to be married tends to be considered a youth. The term ‘*dhalinyarada*’, especially in urban settings, is associated with those who do not have

the *mas'uuliyadda* (responsibilities) associated with taking care of a spouse and children.⁷⁹

In Somaliland society, youth in general occupy an awkward social position. Even though they have been active in milestone events in the history of Somaliland,⁸⁰ they have a limited say in day-to-day social and political affairs (APD, 2010; UNDP, 2012). Youth in general tend to be perceived as inexperienced and to make decisions in haste, and are thus not to be trusted with important matters. A popular Somali saying is *nin yari intuu geed ka boodo ayuu talo ka boodaa*, which can be loosely translated as 'a young man makes mistakes (as easily) as he jumps over a log'. This saying reflects the prevailing social perception of Somali youth. Although youth is not a homogenous concept and not all youth in Somaliland have similar experiences, there are incidences where youth have managed to quickly climb the social ladder—either through their employment positions or business ventures. For the purpose of this discussion, however, it is the prevailing perception of youth in general terms that applies.

The above perceptions have created an environment in which young people struggle to find ways to obtain social standing. These perceptions also act as a barrier, restricting them from participating in the political and economic spheres that could also provide them with an avenue for obtaining social standing. In politics, for example, although people as young as sixteen are allowed to vote, young people are rarely involved in the decision-making bodies in political parties or in government administrations (APD, 2010). In fact, given that kinship continues to play a vital role in politics (even within the multiparty system), it is often the case that a kinship group would not want to be represented by a young person precisely because of a perceived lack of experience (ibid.). There are, however, a few exceptions. For example, in the *Guurti* (house of elders) it is possible for a young man to inherit his father's seat, a

⁷⁹ In rural nomadic settings, the situation is somewhat different. It is not uncommon for young boys and girls to be given significant levels of responsibilities, such as taking care of a big heard of goats or sheep and, for boys, small camels.

⁸⁰ For example, the famous *Dhagax tuur* (stone throwing) demonstration by young people in the early 1980s against the harsh policies of the military regime (see Bradbury, 2008).

scenario that can quickly transform the relative social status of that particular young man.⁸¹

The exclusion of young people from political affairs in general was engrained in the legislation that prohibited anyone younger than thirty-five years from running for local or national political office. Only after significant levels of lobbying by youth groups such as the umbrella organisation for youth—the Somaliland National Youth Organisation (SONYO)—was this legislation changed in 2011 and the age was lowered to twenty-five.⁸²

Young people also face barriers in the economic sphere. High levels of youth unemployment mean young people often do not have economic independence and thus depend on their families for their basic expenses (see Chapter 8). It also means the transition into adulthood through marriage, where some barriers associated with being *dhalinyarada* can be overcome, is often delayed, especially for young men who are socially required to be economically independent before they can marry. Since a woman is not expected to have the economic means to marry, she is more likely to marry earlier than her male counterpart, transiting into adulthood and thus establishing her social status and position through marriage. Of course, having a university education plays a crucial role in this process. In urban contexts, a young woman with a university degree is perceived to be more desirable than one without.

It would be incorrect to assume that young people in Somaliland are passive agents. Similar to youth in other parts of the world, young Somalis employ several strategies to navigate their environment and improve their social position; higher education is one such strategy. A combination of the social value associated with acquiring knowledge and the fact that not many elders in Somaliland have attained higher education has allowed young people to use higher education as a way of challenging the prevailing status quo. In doing so, they create ways to obtain social

⁸¹ This section mainly focuses on young men in explaining the position of youth in Somali society. This bias is largely due to the fact that young women are even more excluded and tend not to feature in activities outside their homes. Although women have become increasingly involved in economic activities outside the home during the post-war period, in many ways this development has simultaneously resulted in young women having to play even bigger roles at home—taking care of the home and their siblings, while their mothers are working. It is the case that older women have more of a voice in Somali society than young women.

⁸² Somaliland electoral laws Article 33(4) amended by a presidential decree on 13 December 2011.

standing, especially if higher education leads to a job that allows the young person to be economically independent and in a position to support relatives and kin. The excerpts below from a conversation with new graduates at a graduation ceremony in Hargeisa on 5 September 2013 reflect this view.

- Graduate 1:** With a degree your value in the community increases.
- Graduate 2:** You can change your community. You can bring new ideas and improve your family and your country.
- Graduate 3:** You get respect because you are an educated person.
- Graduate 4:** Your reputation increases. When you speak, people listen to you.
- Graduate 5:** Everybody trusts you. They will give you a job you want.

The extent to which young people in Somaliland are able to realise the social values associated with higher education noted above is difficult to gauge. It is also questionable as to what extent acquiring higher education really does alter social perceptions of youth that seem deeply embedded in the social psyche. This is even more questionable if, as discussed above, graduates are not able to translate their degrees into economic means that allow them to be financially independent and in a position to contribute to the wellbeing of their family and wider kin. However, as the excerpts above indicate, it is evident that young people who benefit from higher education are very optimistic that as they are now educated, they feel able to overcome some of the negative social connotations generally associated with young people in Somaliland society.

7.3.3 ‘I did not have anything else to do.’

In addition to the desire to achieve social standing through university education, 21 percent of the surveyed university graduates report that they were motivated to start university mainly because they did not have anything else to do. As is noted in Chapter 4, one of the main motivations that compelled community coalitions to

establish universities was the widespread concern about a large number of young people (mainly unmarried men) wandering the streets with nothing to do. The concerns during this time were largely tied to the potential threat that idle youth posed to the nascent peace and future of the country. In the absence of productive employment, education in general, and higher education in particular, were seen as suitable alternatives and a means to keep young people occupied and away from activities that could disrupt the peace.

Although the environment at the time of this research differs from the early post-war period, evidence of continuation is also prevalent. Employment opportunities continue to be limited and youth unemployment is still very high (ILO, 2013a; WB, 2014b). In this environment, university education is seen as something to occupy (young) people; a substitute for productive employment. Of course there is a caveat here. Going to university is structurally different from being employed. In contrast to being in employment, where in most cases an individual gets paid, going to university requires an individual to make payment to the higher education institution. In this case, how can going to university be a suitable alternative to employment?

In the Somaliland context, there are two main reasons why going to university is considered a suitable alternative to productive employment. First, as finding a job for high school graduates is extremely difficult, young people are often left with only two choices—do nothing or go to university. Since doing nothing, as discussed below, is socially frowned upon, going to university is the only alternative available to them. Second and relatedly, even though going to university is not free, the fact that the majority of fees are paid for by relatives reduces the direct costs to the individual. This scenario, however, raises crucial theoretical questions pertaining to the applicability of human capital theory, along with its use of cost-benefit and RORE analysis, to explain the motivations behind the demand for education. The next section examines these questions.

7.3.3.1 *‘I did not have anything else to do.’ Implications for the cost-benefit analysis of education*

According to human capital theory, decisions to invest in education crucially depend on a favourable cost-benefit analysis. The total cost of educational investment consists of the direct costs of education, such as the money spent on fees and books, while the indirect costs are associated with opportunity costs, or the time and income forgone during studies. The benefits are the discounted future returns in the form of higher earnings in the labour market. If the expected returns are higher than the total costs, a rational-utility-maximising individual would be willing to forgo current income for the sake of future returns.

One explicit assumption of human capital theory is that the opportunity costs associated with educational investment (the income foregone while studying) constitute a substantial part of the total cost of education investment. Foregone income is also crucial in the valuation of the worthiness of this investment. If earning opportunities at the present time are relatively high and, as a result, the total cost of education becomes higher than the expected future benefit, the incentive to invest in education declines. The inherent assumption here is that there is always an income to be foregone. This contrasts with labour market realities in many countries, especially those in the SSA region, where decent employment opportunities in general are scarce and extremely rare for young people (ILO, 2013b), who usually comprise the largest proportion of people demanding education.

The lack of employment opportunities in Somaliland means that the income forgone for the majority of prospective university students is relatively low. The low indirect costs reduce the overall costs of education investment. In the process, this inflates the expected returns for higher education and fuels further demand for this level of education. The following excerpt captures how one prospective student made a decision to attend university in an environment of limited opportunities for productive employment.

I did not have anything else to do. I had tried to find a job before, but I could not find one. [...] I stayed at home. Then I told myself, “Just go to university.” My friends were already studying (interview with a female graduate from Gollis University, 2010 cohort, Hargeisa, 22 August 2013).

There is an important caveat here. Arguably, forgone income is not the only component of the opportunity costs, or what constitute the indirect costs, of education. It could be argued that leisure which is forgone is also an important component of the opportunity costs that prospective students take into consideration when making decisions about whether to invest in education. Although this argument has merits, to reflect realities on the ground it must be preceded by an analysis on how leisure in general is perceived and valued in a given society.

If leisure is defined to mean ‘free time’, ‘spare time’, or ‘to generally take time off from the socially constructed idea of being involved in productive activities’, then leisure in the Somaliland context is socially frowned upon, especially for men. The prevailing perception is that if a person (especially a man) is not involved in activities to support his family and is not contributing to the wellbeing of his kin, he must be ill. Often words that carry specific negative social connotations, such as ‘*masheqaysto*’ (the one who does not work) are often used to refer to a man not involved in productive activities.

In Somali society, there are substantial social obligations, notably for men, to provide support to their immediate family and their kin members (see Chapter 2). A crucial implication here is that if a man is not able to fulfil the expected social obligations, his status and value significantly declines in the society (Gardner and El-Bushra, 2015). This social system thus restricts the pursuit of individual interests, such as leisure time. Although leisure foregone is an important opportunity cost associated with studying, for this to be a determining factor in the cost-benefit analysis to education investment in Somaliland, it must have a value—a benefit that the individual can acquire from such an endeavour. In Somaliland, however, incentives to pursue leisure are largely offset by the potential social costs associated with such an endeavour. The excerpt below from a 2010 graduate provides insight on the choice between doing nothing and attending university.

When you finish secondary school, there are two choices. You go to university or you do nothing. You cannot do nothing. [...] How can you do nothing? [...] (interview with a male graduate from Amoud University, 2010 cohort, Borama, 20 August 2013).

If income and leisure forgone are not substantial parts of the indirect or opportunity costs of education investment, then the benefit of education could be

falsely inflated. In addition, in an environment where alternatives to studying are limited, the need to find something to do *now* becomes more important in shaping an individual's decision, rather than the expectation of a certain return to education in *future*. Although direct costs are still relevant, these also become lower if the alternative is to do nothing, especially given the social perceptions and expectations noted above. In addition, these direct costs could actually be much lower for an individual if earlier findings are taken into consideration; namely, for the majority of people pursuing higher education in Somaliland, the bulk of their direct costs (the fees) are paid for by relatives.

7.3.3.2 *Postponing the inevitable*

During the course of this research, it became evident that using education as an alternative to productive employment can also continue after graduation. Since university education typically lasts for three or four years, graduates can also find themselves with nothing to do after graduation. A conversation with new graduates at a graduation ceremony in September 2013 suggests that when they perceive opportunities in the labour market to be scarce, they tend to opt out and pursue further education instead. The excerpt below exemplifies this trend.

I'm looking for a job now. I'm sending my CV everywhere and I ask everyone. But I think instead of waiting for a job that is not there it is better to study (interview with a male graduate from Admas University, 2013 cohort, Hargeisa, 5 September 2013).

Using university education as alternative or substitute for productive employment can therefore lead to an increase in demand for succeeding (postgraduate) levels of education. The implication here is that the value of university education becomes purely the option value or the value associated with the ability to proceed to the next level of education (Heckman et al., 2006). It is difficult to foresee what will happen after the demand for postgraduate studies increases, as at the time of research in 2013 the postgraduate segment of the higher education sector was only beginning to emerge. However, during discussions graduates who were planning to pursue postgraduate studies, it is clear that they are optimistic that with a postgraduate degree, their employment outcomes would improve. This is illustrated in the excerpt below from a new graduate.

There's no work in Somaliland because the economy is very low. But when you have more education, it is possible to find a good job (interview with a female graduate from Admas University, 2013 cohort, Hargeisa, 5 September 2013).

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter shows that in contrast to the narrow prescriptions of human capital theory, where demand for education is predominantly explained by cost-benefit considerations and RORE analysis (see Chapter 3), non-economic considerations are also crucial in shaping demand for university education in Somaliland. In line with the propositions of the SOP approach, discussions in this chapter show that there are specific social and cultural meanings attached to higher education and that these play an important role in influencing decisions to pursue higher education.

The next chapter begins the analysis of post-graduation employment outcomes. Analysing what graduates do after completing their studies provides important insights into the mechanisms connecting higher education to positive development outcomes via the activities of graduates.

Chapter 8: Graduate Employment Outcomes

8.1 Introduction

The analysis of drivers fuelling the demand for higher education in the previous chapter reveals that in contrast to predominant propositions of human capital theory, the hope for improving pecuniary returns is not the only factor motivating individuals to pursue university education in Somaliland. Non-economic factors, such as the hope for improved social standing due to the high social value associated with university education and the educated individual, are also important.

This chapter, which is organised into two main sections, examines the employment outcomes of university graduates in Somaliland. The first part analyses the employment status of graduates, providing a snapshot of graduate employment and unemployment activities at the time of this study. The findings in this section indicate that in contrast to prevailing concerns about unemployment among graduates (see Chapter 7), the employment outcomes of graduates are better than those of non-graduates. In fact, the proportion of employed graduates is higher than that of the population at large.

The second part of the chapter examines all employment activities graduates have been active in since completing their studies, including periods of unemployment. This analysis reveals that the majority of graduates who were employed when this study was conducted had in fact held these jobs at the time of graduation. For the proportion of graduates who were unemployed when they graduated, the transition period from university to full-time employment is found to be relatively short.

The discussion in this chapter utilises two data sets. The first data set is a tracer survey of the complete employment and unemployment history of 625 graduates (2008–2012 cohorts) from graduation to the time this research was undertaken (January–October 2013). The gender ratio of the respondents was 79 percent male and 21 percent female. The second data set is a comparative tracer study of 297 (57 percent male and 43 percent female) non-university graduates. The data collected

from non-graduates is a record of their employment and unemployment history covering a period of the last three years from the time of the data collection.

Employment statistics alone reveal that graduates in Somaliland seem to perform better in the labour market. However, this chapter argues that this finding must be qualified by one crucial caveat; that is, the largest proportion of graduates is found to be working in a highly informal education sector characterised by vulnerable forms of working arrangements.

8.2 What is Work?

Before proceeding, it is important to briefly discuss what is considered work in the Somaliland context and how this definition formulates people's views about different types of jobs and their perceptions of people working in these jobs. This research finds that the concept of work is heavily entrenched in socially constructed meanings of what is perceived to be suitable and appropriate work for certain groups of people in society.

For university graduates, appropriate work is found to be closely associated with formal white-collar jobs and specific types of formal employers, such as donor agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), large entities in the sales and services sector, such as telecommunications or remittance companies, as well as government and educational institutions. Working for small sales and services entities in the informal sector—where the majority of the working-age population in Somaliland is employed (WB, 2014b)—is not considered suitable for educated university graduates. Similarly, being employed in the trade industry as a plumber or electrician,⁸³ a sector locally known as *'farsamada gacanta'* (jobs associated with manual work) is also socially regarded to be of low status and not suitable for university graduates.

During the course of this study it became evident that the social connotations associated with different types of jobs had implications for graduates' experiences in the labour market. First, graduates feel a significant amount of pressure to exclusively seek a career in sectors or with employers deemed suitable for the high social value

⁸³ These types of jobs were generated in the Somaliland urban economy due to the continual growth of the construction sector during the post-war era.

and prestige associated with their level of education. Consequently, unemployed graduates are found to be highly inflexible in their search for work, with some even content to remain unemployed and wait for fitting positions to emerge. The implication here is that as more graduates queue up for their desired jobs, the likelihood of securing these positions declines.⁸⁴

Second, since not all graduates can afford to stay unemployed, some eventually accept jobs that they view as being socially unsuitable. However, in some of these instances, these individuals are not forthcoming in declaring they are employed or involved in any paid activity. For example, interviews reveal that a graduate working as a teacher at a secondary school for only two hours a day would declare outright that he or she is employed, while another graduate employed in a small shop working for more than eight hours a day would comfortably report that he or she is unemployed. The main justification for this is that graduates regard the latter job category as merely *ku meel gaar ah* (something to keep one busy until suitable work is found). It is not uncommon, however, for *ku meel gaar ah* to become permanent jobs.

Therefore, if the normal definition of being employed does not take into account these social intricacies, a large number of people might report being unemployed when they are really employed. To overcome the potential underestimation of employed graduates, this research expands the definition of being employed by asking graduates whether they are involved in any paid or unpaid employment. It also queries whether they are involved in what they consider to be *ku meel gaar ah*. During this study, it became clear that by asking both questions, and by using the phrase '*ku meel gaar ah*', which is a way of acknowledging that their situation is understood, individuals are more willing to declare that they are indeed employed.

The above social perceptions and labour market peculiarities are not unique to Somaliland and similar issues are noted by various scholars who study the employment market in many sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. For example, in a study of rural labour markets in Tanzania, (Mueller, 2011) finds that casual manual agricultural labour is referred to as '*kibarua*', a derogatory word in Swahili with links

⁸⁴ This can also increase rigidity and segmentation in the labour market, as the standard Harris-Tadaro (1970) model elucidates.

to former forms of slave labour. It is important to note here that since the very concept of work itself is socially constructed, it is to be expected that different societies formulate different meanings for different types of jobs (WB, 2013). Without a clear understanding of these social ambiguities, employment statistics alone can be misleading (Oya, 2013).

It is also worth noting that the socially constructed criteria of what jobs university educated individuals are expected to do is rooted in a long history of conflicts and contestations that continue to exist in the relationship between the secular imported model of schooling and the socio-economic realities of societies exposed to this model of education (Ki-Zerbo et al., 1997). In the context of Africa, the association of secular education with ideas of modernisation, development, and upward mobility—ideas that connect the educated individual to formal activities in the urban sector—have largely shaped social perceptions and expectations for post-university occupations. Although these have not remained constant, and there have been many efforts across Africa to reorient education systems and the attitudes they instil in educated individuals, the relationship between higher levels of education and formal sector employment continues to exist.

8.3 Current Employment Status

8.3.1 Employed graduates

Taking the above discussion into account, of the total traced 625 graduates, 428 (68.5 percent) state that they were involved in some form of paid or unpaid employment at the time of the data collection. Overwhelmingly, apart from only two graduates who were in voluntary unpaid work, all other employed graduates claim to be in paid employment. Cash is the only form of payment reported and instances of in-kind forms of payment are not observed. The remaining 197 (31.5 percent) graduates report not being involved in any paid or unpaid activities.

Table 8.1: Graduate employment status

Sample (N)	Proportion employed (%)	Proportion unemployed (%)
625	68.5%	31.5%

Source: Field data.

Table 8.2 below disaggregates the employment data by yearly cohort. The fact that over half of the 2012 group report to be unemployed is to a large extent expected since this cohort had only just completed studies and consequently had not spent sufficient time in the labour market searching for employment at the time of the data collection.

Table 8.2: Graduate employment status (per yearly cohort)

Year	Sample size (N)	Proportion employed (%)	Proportion unemployed (%)
2008	34	76.5%	23.5%
2009	52	67.3%	32.7%
2010	180	71.1%	28.9%
2011	277	72.2%	27.8%
2012	82	47.6%	52.4%

Source: Field data.

The proportion of employed graduates in this study is higher than the reported population-wide statistics. According to the survey conducted for the *Somalia Human Development Report 2012*, the employment rate of the working-age population (fifteen to sixty-four years) in Somalia (including in Somaliland) stood at 46 percent (UNDP, 2012). For youth aged fourteen to twenty-nine years, only a third is employed (ibid.). In 2011, the *Somaliland National Development Plan (2012–2016)* reports a slightly higher figure—approximately 53 percent of the working-age population was employed and youth employment was found to be much lower at about a quarter (SLMoP, 2011b). The 2012 labour force survey in Somaliland, technically supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO), finds employment figures to be much lower; for example, among people aged fifteen to sixty-four years, only 23 percent were employed (also in WB, 2014). The survey also finds that only 5 percent of individuals aged fifteen to twenty-four years were employed (ibid.).

University graduates comprise only a small proportion of Somaliland's working-age population and the employment statistics found in this study are by no means representative of all graduates in the region. Nonetheless, they do provide an important indicator of the relatively better-off position of university graduates in the labour market compared to non-graduates.

Using a comparative data set of 297 non-graduates aged twenty-three to thirty-four years (age group corresponding to that of the traced university graduates), a brief comparison can be made. Table 8.3 below shows that graduates are more likely to be employed compared to non-graduates. The proportion of employed and unemployed non-graduates is more closely aligned to the population-wide statistics that are reported in the *Somalia Human Development Report 2012* (UNDP, 2012).

Table 8.3: Current employment status: graduates vs. non-graduates

	Sample (N)	Proportion employed (%)	Proportion unemployed (%)
Graduates	625	68.5	31.5
Non-graduates	297	45.5	54.5

Source: Field data.

Across the three researched sites in Somaliland (Hargeisa, Borama, and Burao), the largest proportion of employed graduates was found in Hargeisa. This is expected given the prevailing economic disparity between Hargeisa and other regions in the country. As the capital city of Somaliland, Hargeisa is a central hub for social, economic, and major public institutions, as well as private enterprises, donor agencies and NGOs. This centrality means that there are relatively more employment opportunities in Hargeisa compared to Burao or Borama. During a focus group discussion in Borama, for example, a mother of a university student points out that it is difficult for graduates to find jobs in Borama because ‘all the NGOs were in Hargeisa’.⁸⁵

This employment data are then disaggregated by gender. Across all cohorts, male graduates are more likely to be employed than their female counterparts. Of the total 428 graduates who were employed at the time this study was conducted, 88 percent are males while only 12 percent are females. A closer look at the data suggests that in contrast to male graduates, female graduates are not better off in the labour market compared to non-graduate females or working-age women in Somaliland. The 2012 labour force survey reports that 17 percent of working-age women were employed in the country. Furthermore, in the comparative sample, non-

⁸⁵ Prior to 1997, the bulk of international aid and development agencies (donor agencies and NGOs) operated in Borama because of the relative peace and stability the town experienced in the immediate post-war period. However, from 1997, the then president of Somaliland, Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Egal, ordered all agencies to transfer their activities to the capital, Hargeisa.

graduate females comprise 33 percent of all employed non-graduates (see Table 8.4 below).

Table 8.4: Female employment status: graduates vs. non-graduates

	Total employed (males and females)	Proportion of females employed (%)
Graduates	428	12%
Non-graduates	135	33%

Source: Field data.

There are a number of factors that offer some explanation as to why female graduates are not experiencing similar levels of success in the labour market as male graduates. First, in the analysis of unemployed graduates, female graduates are found more likely to *not* be actively seeking employment compared to their male counterparts. This is due to a number of reasons, chief among these is being married (see discussion below).

Second, since the majority of working-age women are employed in informal jobs within the sales and services sector (ILO, 2013a), an area perceived socially unsuitable for university graduates, a proportion of unemployed females is found to be highly inflexible when seeking employment. They prioritise searching only within a specific set of sectors and employers, and are willing to stay unemployed and wait for suitable opportunities to arise.

The discussion so far only focuses on graduate employment status at the time of data collection. However, the statistic that 68.5 percent of graduates are employed does not reveal any details about the types of jobs graduates are involved in and the conditions of their employment. This information is crucial to understanding the potential impact these jobs have on wider development outcomes at both the micro and macro levels.

8.3.1.1 *Length of employment*

The 428 employed graduates were asked how long they had been in their current jobs. The findings suggest that over three quarters (79 percent) of all graduates had been in their job for three years or less. This is to be expected given that those who graduated in 2010, 2011, and 2012 represent the largest share of all traced graduates in this study (see Table 8.5 below).

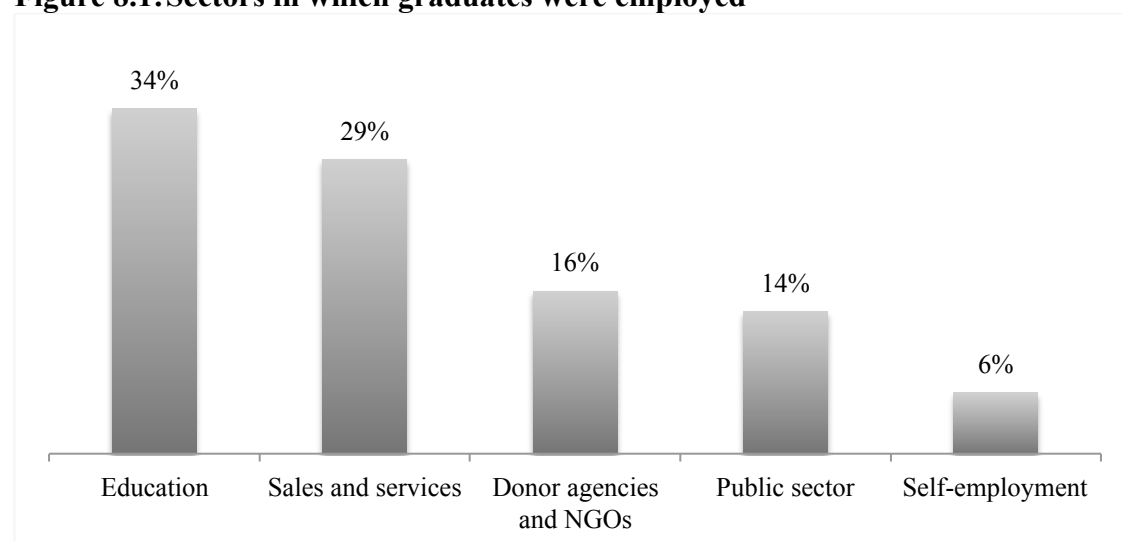
Table 8.5: Length of time in current job

Length of time	Proportion of employed graduates (%) (n=428)
Up to 1 year	22%
> 1–2 years	34%
> 2–3 years	23%
> 3–4 years	12%
> 4–5 years	3%
Over 5 years	6%

Source: Field data; percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

8.3.1.2 *Sector of employment*

Employed graduates were asked which sector they were working in (see Figure 8.1 below). The largest proportion of graduates, 34 percent, were employed in the education industry; 29 percent were working for small to medium-sized enterprises connected to the sales and services sector; 16 percent for donor agencies and NGOs linked to the aid, humanitarian, and development industry; 14 percent in the public sector; and the remaining 6 percent report to be self-employed.

Figure 8.1: Sectors in which graduates were employed

Source: Field data; percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

8.3.1.2.1 *Education sector*

It is to be expected that the largest proportion of graduates is found to be employed in the education sector given the significant growth of this sector across all levels during the post-war period (see Chapter 2) and the shortage of qualified teachers. The lack of human resources continues to be one of the key challenges that the education sector

faces. In the *Primary School Census 2011/2*, the Ministry of Education reports that 49 percent of all teachers working in primary schools were not qualified (i.e., did not have any form of teacher training) (SLMoE, 2012a).

Graduates are found to be working in primary, secondary, and university institutions as administrators and teachers. At the university level, teaching jobs are automatically awarded to graduates who finished either in the top or second place (based on grade point average, GPA) in their respective faculties (see Chapter 6). Other graduates who finish with a lower GPA are employed in administrative-based roles at universities. In primary and secondary schools, university graduates are mostly found to be teaching. However, university graduates are not the only individuals found in these posts. Current university students are also prevalent as teachers, especially in primary schools. Since the majority of universities operate morning and evening shifts, university students are able to teach at primary schools in the mornings and attend classes in the evening.

The fact that at the time of this research a large proportion of graduates were employed in the education sector suggests that the major role this sector is playing in Somaliland society is the production of graduates needed to support the growing education sector. Furthermore, as the higher education sector continues to expand and the number of university graduates in the labour market rises, it is plausible to hypothesise that the relative increase in the supply of graduates provides an incentive for the further growth of the sector. The working arrangements of graduates employed in the education sector, in particular the vulnerability of employment in this sector, is discussed below.

8.3.1.2.2 Sales and services sector

One of the prominent features of Somaliland's post-war economy is the rise of the private sector, in particular private companies involved in sales and services activities. This sector is the biggest employer in the country (ILO, 2013a; WB, 2014b). However, since this sector is composed of different-sized entities—ranging from small shops selling food and non-food items to medium and large telecommunications and remittance companies—jobs generated in this sector vary significantly.

Although this sector is the second biggest employer of graduates in this study, its relationship with university graduates is found to be puzzling. The bulk of businesses in this sector operate in informal settings, creating jobs that (based on the socially constructed preconceptions discussed above), are not considered suitable for university graduates. This results in individuals who work in this sector often referring to these jobs as '*ku meel gaar ah*' during interviews and claiming that they were still looking for suitable jobs with large formal employers in this sector or others, such as in education or government.

8.3.1.2.3 Donor agencies and the NGO sector

Working for donor agencies or NGOs linked to the international aid, humanitarian, and development sector is considered by graduates to be the most prestigious sector in which they could work. Being employed in this sector not only provides an individual with a relatively higher salary (see comparisons below), but also a higher social standing. Social status is partly derived from the financial resources associated with this sector and other types of resources individuals working in this sector are able to access. For example, although in Somali society elders rarely consult younger generations in important matters (see Chapter 7), it is not uncommon for elders to approach young people employed in this sector for material and non-material support. Working in this sector can thus quickly and positively alter both the financial and social position of the individual.

Although this sector is the third most important employer of graduates in this study, jobs are highly competitive and securing a position is found to be extremely difficult. One of the reasons for this is purely to do with the large number of applications for the few jobs advertised. Graduates find themselves competing with their counterparts with degrees from neighbouring countries and East Asia, along with returnees from the Somaliland diaspora who—equipped with degrees from Europe and North America and proficiency in English—also target these jobs. An informal conversation with a human resource officer in this sector reveals that the organisation is often overwhelmed by the number of applications it receives and has resorted to employing a wide range of screening tools to filter out applications (discussed below).

The second reason behind difficulties in securing employment in this sector is primarily due to the number of jobs being created and the stability of these jobs. This study finds that jobs in this sector are small in number and highly volatile. Job creation is mainly project-based and depends on the availability of donor funds, which in turn depend on trends in the global development agenda. For instance, the rise of discourses on the war on terror and piracy from the early 2000s means that the number and types of jobs created by donor agencies and NGOs are proportional to these discourses. That is, these jobs increased and decreased in relation to the predominance of these discourses on the international development agenda.

It is not unusual for projects to stop and for jobs to be lost if NGOs on the ground fail to secure funds. For example, during the course of this research, a United States Agency for International Aid-funded project in Hargeisa was in the midst of uncertainty about whether an existing project was to receive an extension or not. During this period, a number of employees were made redundant. Employment volatility means that a large number of local individuals working in this sector tends to be employed on short-term contracts. The analysis of graduates' employment history reveals that one of the main reasons graduates left their jobs in this sector is because their contract had ended.

8.3.1.2.4 Public sector

This study found that the fourth important employer of graduates in Somaliland is the public sector. Public sector employment has had a long history in the higher education sector in the SSA region (see Chapter 3). A number of studies across countries in SSA note changes in the structure of formal employment in the region, particularly the fall in public sector employment (Teal, 2011) and the rise in wage employment for small enterprises (Nsowah-Nuamah et al., 2010). Even though public sector employment is contracted, studies carried out in SSA find that graduates are still more likely to be employed in the public sector than non-graduates. In their case study of Tanzania and Ghana, Rankin et al. (2010) uncover that in both countries the probability of being employed in the public sector increases with the level of education.

The case of Somaliland differs from trends in other SSA countries. First, given the country's recent turbulent history, the size of the post-war public sector is

extremely small. To put it into perspective, in 2010 there were only about 4,000 civil servants who staffed government institutions across Somaliland (interview with a government official, Hargeisa, 12 February 2013). Even though this number increased by almost three times to 11,327 by 2012 due to the efforts by the current administration to increase the capacity of public institutions (SLMoP, 2013, p. 6), the public sector continues to be relatively small.

Second, since public sector recruitment depends on a number of factors, particularly the effort to adhere to some form of kinship balance (see discussion on Somalia's social structures in Chapter 2), graduates are not more likely to find jobs in this sector. Although in this study graduates are slightly more represented in this sector than non-graduates, this is mainly due to the deliberate effort made by key governmental figures. As a result, some departments in the Ministry of National Planning and Development, such as the Statistics Department, are mostly filled with young university graduates.

8.3.1.2.5 Self-employment

In their study of Kenya and Tanzania, Rankin et al. (2010) find that the probability of being self-employed is the second highest outcome for university students in both countries. These findings reveal that self-employment is the least likely outcome for university graduates in Somaliland.

However, it is important to note that at the time this research was conducted self-employment in general was heavily promoted in Somaliland, mostly by NGOs and often under the umbrella of youth entrepreneurship. NGOs frequently set up workshops to equip young Somalis with entrepreneurial skills. Additionally, since access to credit is limited due to the absence of commercial banking facilities in the country, NGOs also run a number of funding initiatives, which allows young people to submit business proposals to apply for funds. NGOs also design competitions and award funding to select business proposals.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Interestingly, since writing business proposals in English is a challenge for most young people in Somaliland, a whole new profession for people who write business proposals has emerged. Many of these individuals hail from neighbouring countries, such as Kenya and Uganda, and have arrived in Somaliland mostly to take advantage of these types of opportunities.

The success of these self-employment initiatives is not investigated in-depth by this study. However, an example of a group of ten women in Qoyta, a village outside Burao, who were given a start-up capital of USD 400 each by a micro-finance organisation, provides an important insight. The majority of women who received this money established similar businesses (small shops selling food and basic non-food items) in the village, which increased the supply of shops (while demand patterns remained the same) and goods. In the end, the majority of these businesses failed (interview, Qoyta, 20 March 2013).

The promotion of self-employment in Somaliland largely follows a widespread belief in development literature about its potential as a means to generate jobs. Self-employment among young people is often hailed as an important route to empower younger generations and overcome youth unemployment (Garcia and Fares, 2008). However, other studies have questioned the very concept of self-employment, especially in informal urban settings where significant levels of differentiation exist among self-employed individuals. The self-employed are not, as (Wuyts, 2011, p. 11) argues, ‘an amorphous mass of undifferentiated small-scale entrepreneurs pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps’. Individuals reporting to be self-employed are often embroiled in complex arrangements riddled with power structures and conflicts; arrangements that resemble insecure forms of wage labour rather than self-employment activities, as (Rizzo, 2011) discloses in a study of transport workers in Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania.

The analysis of self-employment activities that graduates were involved in reveals that the majority of these ventures are relatively small, with some being established for as little as USD 100. These types of initiatives range from small shops selling basic food and non-food items, referred to locally as ‘*meheerad*’, small coffee/tea cafés, internet cafés, printing, or photocopy stalls to game centres (arcade-like shops with simple gaming machines).

During interviews, some graduates did not consider these activities to be paid employment, often noting instead that they were unemployed. It only became evident that they were involved in these activities when they asked whether they had ever started a business and if it was still operational. A key justification for this omission is to do with graduates’ perceptions of these initiatives. Since many of these ventures

are very small, they are often explained as ‘*biil*’ (household expenses) and not as potential sites for capital accumulation.

8.3.1.3 *Gender differences in the employment sector*

This section briefly disaggregates the employment data to determine whether differences exist between male and female graduates. The findings reveal some form of segmentation in the labour market. Although the education sector is important for both genders, female graduates are more likely to be working for NGOs and governmental institutions compared to their male counterparts. Table 8.6 below summarises the top three employment sectors by gender.

Table 8.6: Top three employment sectors (male vs. female graduates)

Employed male graduates (n=375)	Employed female graduates (n=53)
1. Education (35%)	1. Donor agencies and NGOs (28%)
2. Sales and services (31%)	2. Education (26%)
3. Donor agencies and NGOs (14%)	3. Public (25%)

Source: Field data; the sample sizes (n) represent the number of employed male and female graduates among the total 428 graduates who were employed at the time this research was conducted.

These findings are both surprising and not. They are not surprising in the sense that deliberate efforts to recruit more female candidates by donor agencies and NGOs and in the public sector are observed during the course of this study. Funding applications that these agencies submit often have to declare the number of female employees or the extent of female beneficiaries impacted by particular projects. Consequently, since an overwhelming number of governmental projects are funded by donor agencies, governmental institutions, at least to some extent, also must adhere to this requirement. It thus makes sense that within this framework these two sectors are found to be the biggest employers of female graduates.

These findings are surprising in the sense that female graduates are least likely to be employed in the sales and services sector, which is not only the largest employment sector in the economy, but is a particularly important sector for women (WB, 2014b). It is also worth noting here that since to some degree the social pressure to find a job and support one’s family is less enforced on women than men, female graduates might have more flexibility when searching for jobs. They might also spend more time in unemployment waiting for suitable jobs than be forced to take up jobs in the sales and services sector.

In addition, well-respected, high-paying jobs available in the sales and services sector are found to be inaccessible to women. Roles that involve direct interaction with customers, such as those at large telecommunications and financial companies, are almost exclusively offered to men due to the prevailing cultural and religious norms that restrict women's interaction with men who are not their relatives or spouses. Although there have been efforts to change this, at the time of this research the practice was still very much in place. Moreover, frequent visits to Telesom and Dahabshiil branches in Hargeisa, two of the largest (single) employers in the sales and services sector, reveal that their customer service clerks continue to be exclusively males, although for both organisations some back office staff are reported to be women.

There are also other jobs that female graduates report difficulty in accessing primarily due to employers' perceptions that they are jobs for men. For example, even though this study found that a substantial number of females graduate with information and communications technology (ICT), it is difficult for these graduates to access technical ICT jobs. An excerpt below from an official at the University of Hargeisa (UoH) reveals the scope of this issue.

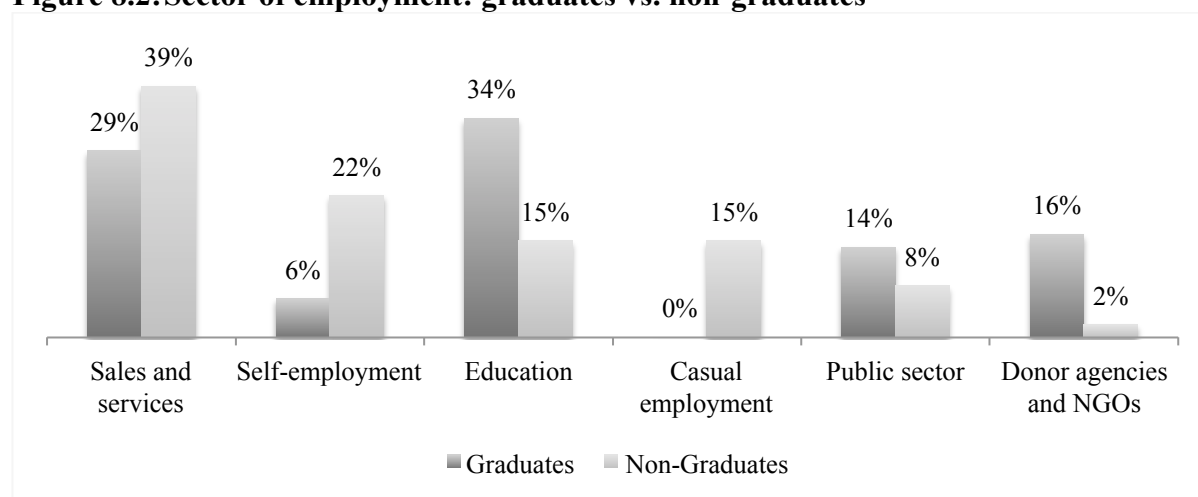
It's difficult for women to get high jobs [in terms of job titles and remuneration] in any formal institution. Take our university, for example. You will find almost all our administrative and teaching staff used to be students here. But if you look closely, what you will find is that female graduates are mainly doing administration types of jobs and are not involved in high-level management or technical jobs. Female graduates with strong ICT degrees, for example, are all doing administration. They will not be hired to do anything higher than that (interview, Hargeisa, 10 June 2013).

8.3.1.4 *Differences between graduates and non-graduates in the employment sector*

An important question to ask when analysing employment outcomes of university graduates is whether having a university degree allows them access to specific sectors that may otherwise be restricted to individuals without degrees. Comparing the jobs of graduates and non-graduates reveals clear sector segmentation between the two groups (see Figure 8.2 below). Six key features are observed.

First, this study found that university graduates are more likely to be employed in the education sector compared to non-graduates. This is particularly the case for the formal education sector, in which graduates are hired for both teaching and administrative positions. The majority of non-graduates who report working in the education sector are mostly working as teachers in Quranic schools.

Figure 8.2: Sector of employment: graduates vs. non-graduates



Source: Field data; employed graduates (n=428), employed non-graduates (n=135).

Second, the most important industry for non-graduates is the sales and services sector. While a few large employers operate in formal environments and offer roles that are considered white-collar and thus suitable for graduates, the bulk of employers are small entities—such as shops and restaurants—offering jobs deemed socially unsuitable for university students. The analysis of job titles reported by graduates and non-graduates shows a clear distinction between the different types of employers and jobs available in this sector. While graduates report working as officers, administrators, clerks, project administrators, and managers, non-graduates reporting being largely employed as cashiers, shopkeepers, and waiters. Although this sector is important for both graduates and non-graduates, who gets what job is clearly demarcated.

Third, although self-employment is a least likely outcome for graduates, it is reported to be the second most important sector for non-graduates. Almost 22 percent of non-graduates in this group claim to own stalls selling food and non-food items. A very small minority of non-graduates who report working in the transportation sector as taxi drivers are found not to own the vehicles they drive. Instead, they rent vehicles

from the owner of the car, paying a daily fee of USD 10–20. Although these drivers consider themselves to be self-employed, in reality they are engaged in wage labour. This situation is similar to what Rizzo (2011) finds in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Fourth, in contrast to university graduates who do not report to be involved in any form of casual employment in the informal sector, this type of employment is an important activity for non-graduates. Fifteen percent of non-graduates report to be involved in casual work as porters, construction workers, car cleaners, guards, or domestic workers. Being employed as a casual worker, especially as a manual labourer, is considered low status and is a situation faced by individuals with no other alternatives.

Fifth, graduates are found to be more likely to work for donor agencies and NGOs sector compared to non-graduates. This study finds that this industry almost entirely employs university graduates. Those very few non-graduates who work in this sector are mostly employed in non-office environment roles, such as cleaners and kitchen staff.

Finally, the probability of working in the public sector does not increase with levels of education in Somaliland (as Rankin et al. 2010, find in their case study conducted in Tanzania and Ghana). This is mainly due to prevailing recruitment practices that are loosely based on kinship representation. Deliberate efforts on the ground to recruit university graduates by some government ministries to some extent boost the likelihood of graduates being employed in this sector. However, in normal recruitment practices, non-graduates have a more or less equal chance of working in the public sector.

The discussion above reveals that being a graduate allows access to specific industries and jobs in sectors that are, to a large extent, restricted to non-graduates. It is not a surprise, then, that of the 297 surveyed non-graduates, 80 percent believe that having a university degree improves one's opportunities in the labour market. In fact, more than a third of respondents in this group who were unemployed at the time of data collection report to not be actively seeking employment because they think they do not have the required level of education. The quotes below capture the most frequent insight from this group.

You need a university degree to get a job. Everywhere you go, they ask you, do you have a university degree (interview with a twenty-eight-year-old female secondary school graduate, Hargeisa, 24 August 2013).

I searched for work for two years. Now I have stopped because I do not have the education you need to get a job (interview with a twenty-four-year-old male with some vocational training, Hargeisa, 31 August 2013).

Comparing non-graduates who do secure jobs with graduates also reveals that the former group are more likely to be employed in informal and casual types of roles than the latter group. These differences, as would be expected, have implications on employment arrangements, such as working hours, contractual agreements, and remuneration. This is where discussion now turns.

8.3.1.5 *Employment arrangements*

This section highlights key features of employment arrangements in which graduates find themselves, encompassing working hours, contractual arrangements, and remuneration. Analysing working arrangements is extremely crucial for understanding employee conditions, which cannot be retrieved by looking solely at employment data. Statistics fail to answer important questions, such as whether graduates are employed in jobs that remunerate them adequately and provide them with satisfactory social protection, as for example in the ILO's concept of decent work (ILO, 2012). This section examines the total hours graduates spend at work, the types of contractual agreements they have with their employers, and the average monthly wages they receive across different sectors.

8.3.1.5.1 *Hours of work*

Of the 428 employed graduates, 69 percent report working six days a week and the majority of the remaining respondents report working five days a week. This finding follows the general pattern of the working week in Somaliland, which tends to start on Saturday and end on Thursday. However, it is also common for some employers to follow a five-day workweek, with Friday and either Saturday or Thursday as a non-working day.

Graduates also report the number of hours they work each day. About 60 percent report that they work six to eight hours per day, a further 28 percent work two to five hours per day, and the remaining 12 percent work more than eight hours per day (see Table 8.7 below).

Table 8.7: Hours of work (per day)

Hours	Proportion of employed graduates (%) (n=428)
2–5 hours	28%
6–8 hours	60%
Over 8 hours	12%

Source: Field data.

Although the majority of graduates work six to eight hours, a significant percentage (28 percent) report working between two and five hours per day. When this data are disaggregated by employment sector, a pattern emerges.

First, of the 12 percent of graduates who work more than eight hours per day, close to one half (45 percent) are found to be employed in the sales and services sector. Since a substantial number of jobs in this sector are in small entities operating in informal settings, it is highly plausible that working arrangements, such as hours, are not strictly observed and it is thus not surprising for individuals in this industry to work longer hours.⁸⁷

Second, of the 28 percent of graduates who work two to five hours, over half (56 percent) are working in the education sector, mostly as teachers. These graduates report being employed on a per-class, per-term basis, which is an important cost-saving strategy for universities. At the UoH, for instance, more than 95 percent of lecturers report working on a part-time basis (Jones, 2016, p. 20). Graduates with teaching jobs also tend to work in multiple schools in order to accumulate enough hours. Sixty-eight percent of all graduates who report having multiple jobs are employed in the education sector.

⁸⁷ According to Somalia's Private Sector Employees Law—Law No: 31/2004 (as amended in 2008–2009), Chapter 3 Article 11—every employee is entitled to a minimum of a twelve-hour rest from the end of one working day to the next. Somaliland also utilises the pre-war Labour Code No. 65 of 18 October 1972, sections 85 to 87, which declare that normal hours of work shall not exceed eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week.

8.3.1.5.2 *Employment contract*

During interviews, employed graduates were asked whether they held some form of employment contract detailing contractual arrangements. The findings in this section reveal a clear sectorial distinction. Graduates working for donor agencies and NGOs overwhelmingly report having a written contract covering working arrangements, such as working hours, remuneration, and length of employment.

Some graduates working in the public sector are also found to have contracts. This is particularly the case for graduates who had been employed recently at the time of the study. Two factors help explain this. First, the 2013 government administration was continuing to push for the professionalisation of public institutions. Second, this was required by the recruitment processes of the Civil Services Commission (CSC).⁸⁸ In contrast, graduates working for small enterprises in the sales and services sector are more likely to not have any written employment contracts. The general discourse regarding working arrangements in this sector is that they are informally discussed and verbally agreed upon. Discussions with graduates suggest that employment length (or put differently, whether a job is temporary or permanent) does not seem to be an important aspect of the verbal agreement between an employer and a graduate. The example below of a male graduate who worked in a construction company as a finance assistant clarifies this point (Interview, Hargeisa, 5 June 2013).

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Interviewer: | Do you have a contract in this job? |
| Graduate: | Yes, but it is only a temporary job. I don't like the job. I'm looking for another one. |
| Interviewer: | Does it say in your contract [that] this is a temporary job? |
| Graduate: | What do you mean? |
| Interviewer: | Do you have a written or verbal agreement with your employer about the end date of your employment? |
| Graduate: | No, my employer said I could stay as long as I want, but I don't like the job. It is only temporary. |

Although it is difficult to generalise based on the example above, this exchange highlights that for some employers in the sales and services sector, the question of

⁸⁸ This is the body responsible for the recruitment of civil servants.

contract, and in particular the length of a contract, is not something that is deemed important. In fact, it seems graduates perceive that the choice of how long they work for a particular employer is within their own discretion.

It is tempting to conclude that not having a formal written contract places graduate employees in the aforementioned sector in a vulnerable position. Although this might seem plausible, no evidence is found to support this assumption. In fact, the reason most frequently given for leaving jobs in this sector is: ‘I found a better job’. Furthermore, it is also the case that although formal written contracts do not feature in the majority of employment arrangements, jobs in this sector are often found/offered through social networks (discussed below), which means a prior form of relationship, mostly kinship-based, binds the employer to the employee. This is a form of socially enforced contract that can be very difficult for an employer to break without suffering social reprisals.

Contractual agreements in the education sector, where a large proportion of graduates are employed, are the most volatile. The majority of these individuals do not have contracts and work on a per-term basis without any guarantees of keeping their job in the new academic term. Some arrangements are, however, more vulnerable than others. For example, a common practice for universities is to pay teachers based on the number of students who register for class. This means that until a term starts, the teacher has neither an idea whether he or she will have a job, nor how much income they will receive.

8.3.1.5.3 Remuneration

In addition to other employment factors discussed above, the amount a graduate earns gives a clue about their employment conditions and, in particular, the mechanisms connecting their activities to wider development outcomes via increases in incomes at the micro level. During interviews graduates were asked to provide their monthly earnings. As noted in the methodology section in Chapter 1, income data presented here should be read with caution.

For graduates working in the education sector, this exercise proves challenging given the multiplicity of jobs, as well as the temporary and casual nature of jobs in the sector. Graduates were instead asked to provide an average monthly income from all

paid activities combined. Capturing the average monthly income for self-employed graduates also proves difficult because many report that the largest share of daily receipts are usually spent on household expenses (*bii*). Although graduates offer some estimates, they massively varied, with monthly values ranging from USD 65 to USD 850. These data are highly inconsistent and thus have been removed from the analysis. Given these difficulties and other inherent biases associated with reporting income data, figures presented in this section should only be taken as broad indicators.

Similar to other employment arrangements, wage levels are closely related to the sector of employment. As expected, the mean wage values reported by graduates working for donor agencies and the NGO sector are significantly higher than those reported by graduates in other sectors. These graduates report a mean monthly wage of USD 622, with a median wage of USD 500. Graduates in the sales and services sector report the second highest wage levels, with a mean of USD 379 and median of USD 368.

Graduates working in the education sector come third, with a mean wage of USD 315 and median wage of USD 300. The public sector reports the lowest level of wage earnings for graduates, averaging just USD 284 and a median of USD 250. However, since civil servants also receive other non-financial allowances each month, such as basic food items, total wage levels for graduates working in this sector exceed the monetary figure reported here (see Table 8.8 below).

Table 8.8: Monthly earnings

Sector	Mean monthly earnings (USD)	Median monthly earnings (USD)
Donor agencies and NGOs	622	500
Sales and services	379	368
Education	315	300
Public	284	250
Self-employment*	n/a	n/a

Source: Field data; * earnings from self-employment activities are excluded due to data inconsistency (2013 prices; not adjusted to inflation).

Apart from showing the inter-sectorial differences in wage earnings, the above table does little to shed light on whether these salaries are sufficient to grant graduates access to the social and economic resources they need to lead their lives. This is

particularly important, as for the majority of graduates what they earn is not entirely for their own consumption. Of the 428 employed graduates, for example, 89 percent report to have dependents, such as siblings and parents, for whom they are directly responsible.

Although it is difficult to conclude whether the above earnings are adequate, using a comparative data set of non-graduates shows that graduates are better off in Somaliland's labour market. They not only earn more, but are also more likely to work in lucrative sectors, such as working for donor agencies and NGOs. However, since the majority of graduates work in the education sector on a part-time basis, the monthly amount reflects the accumulation of multiple teaching jobs they hold. Furthermore, since employment in the education sector is not guaranteed and is based on a per-class, per-term basis, the monthly employment figures in Table 8.9 below are not a true reflection of the long-term trends in graduate earnings.

Table 8.9: Differences in earnings: graduates vs. non-graduates

Sector	Graduates		Non-graduates	
	Mean monthly earnings (USD)	Median monthly earnings (USD)	Mean monthly earnings (USD)	Median monthly earnings (USD)
Sales and services	379	368	176	150
Education	315	300	194	170
Public	284	250	201	200
Donor agencies and NGOs*	622	500	n/a	n/a
Self-employment*	n/a	n/a	291	300
Casual employment*	n/a	n/a	137	150

Source: Field data; * n/a represents figures that are either removed from the analysis due to data inconsistency or where the sample size is too small to calculate meaningful descriptive statistics (2013 prices; not adjusted to inflation).

The discussion in this chapter so far focuses on the 428 (or 68.5 percent) graduates who report being employed at the time of data collection. The next section considers the remaining 31.5 percent of graduates who report being unemployed during this period.

8.3.2 Unemployed graduates

Of the total 625 sampled graduates, 197 (31.5 percent) report to not be involved in any paid or unpaid employment, or any form of *ku meel gaar ah* work at the time of the interviews. Male graduates comprise 61 percent of the unemployed group, while the remaining 39 percent are female. The largest proportion of unemployed graduates is found in the 2010 and 2011 cohorts; this means that these cohorts represent the largest share of graduates in the overall sample.

8.3.2.1 *Length of unemployment*

Graduates were asked about the length of time they had been without any paid work since they graduated. Of the total 197 unemployed graduates, 145 (73.5 percent) report they had not been able to secure a job since graduating. The bulk of those remaining had been unemployed for up to one year.

Of the 145 graduates unable to secure a job since graduating, 70 percent graduated in 2011 and 2012, while a large proportion of the remaining group graduated in 2010. Table 8.10 below presents the breakdown per cohort.

Table 8.10: Unemployed since graduation (per yearly cohort)

Year	Proportion (%) (n=145)
2008	0%
2009	8%
2010	21%
2011	41%
2012	29%

Source: Field data; percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

It is important to note that being in the labour market for a year or two after graduation only provides a partial picture of post-graduation outcomes, as these individuals have not, at this point, had sufficient time to seek employment. However, understanding what these graduates have been doing during this period provides vital insights into the crucial period immediately following graduation.

8.3.2.2 *Actively searching for work*

It is anticipated that since the majority of unemployed graduates had only been in the labour market for up to two years, they would most likely be searching for work.

During interviews graduates were asked whether they were *actively* looking for work. Actively looking for work is described as undertaking all the necessary steps that people in the Somaliland context normally take to find work, including speaking to friends and relatives about where there are jobs, as well as preparing and distributing their curricula vitae (CVs).

Out of the unemployed 197 graduates, 135 (68.5 percent) state that they were indeed actively looking for work (the remaining sixty-two graduates [31.5 percent] who report to *not* have been actively looking for work are discussed below). Of the 135 individuals, male graduates comprise 72 percent, while the remaining 28 percent are female graduates.

When asked to describe the types of activities they had been doing to seek employment, graduates who were actively searching for work respond that they first had to prepare their CVs, as most jobs could not be applied for without one. The preparation of CVs and cover letters is noted to have been a challenging task, especially as all jobs require them to be written in English, a language in which many are not fluent. Graduates note that they reached out to friends and relatives who have a better command of the English language for help.

Language difficulties notwithstanding, graduates also report that knowing what to put in the body of CVs proved difficult because most jobs require substantial levels of experience that new graduates do not have. As the supply of university graduates in the urban Somaliland labour market increases, employers seem to be escalating the qualification and experience required for jobs.

Discussions with employers in Hargeisa indicate that tightening requirements is essential in order to reduce the high number of applications they receive each time a post is advertised. For example, in March 2014, the CSC advertised forty-five posts available at the Ministry of Interior. The CSC received over 4,000 applications for the available posts and had to go through a long process of sorting and sieving (Somaliland Sun, 2014).

Once CVs are prepared, graduates report visiting popular employment websites, such as Somali Jobs,⁸⁹ which list the bulk of jobs advertised by organisations linked to donor agencies and NGOs. Graduates also regularly read local newspapers that mostly advertise public sector jobs. During interviews, unemployed graduates often point out that they are overwhelmed by the high costs associated with the job search process. Part of this cost is the long periods of time they spend searching. ‘I go to sleep at 2:00 am every day looking for work’ notes a graduate during an interview (Hargeisa, 5 August 2013).

Although searching for information about jobs is considered to be an investment that can yield high returns when a high-paying role is found (Becker, 1962), when the cost of this information becomes too much both with regard to time and money spent on the endeavour, seekers could end up becoming discouraged and give up the search process altogether. In the case of young people in SSA, becoming disheartened and giving up looking for work is reported to be a much bigger problem than youth unemployment (UNDP et al., 2013).

In Somaliland, graduates refer to being discouraged as ‘*niya jab*’, which literally translates as a ‘breakdown of a will or motivation’. The following excerpts from interviews with graduates reflect the dilemma they face.

You spend so much time applying for jobs in many places, but you do not hear back. You keep applying, but every day you apply for fewer and fewer jobs.

You spend your money and your time searching. When nothing happens, when you keep getting false promises, you give up.

Since not all jobs are advertised in public domains, such as on the internet or local newspapers, graduates rely considerably on their social networks for news about jobs. In fact, only 2 percent of all jobs that graduates had secured (based on the tracer survey) were attained by responding directly to adverts. In contrast, information about 87 percent of all jobs was obtained through family, relatives, or friends (see Table 8.11 below). Social networks thus play a crucial role in facilitating the transfer of

⁸⁹ This is a popular website that mainly lists job adverts from the international aid and development sector in the Somali regions (Somaliland, Puntland, and south and central Somalia).

information about jobs between employers and job seekers, especially in an environment where recruitment agencies do not exist.⁹⁰

The extent of a graduate's social network can also determine his/her relative success in the labour market. For example, graduates report reaching out to their elders and traditional leaders, locally referred as either '*aaqil*' or '*suldan*'. Even though such people do not have authoritative power, they have significant influence in the community and can help pass a graduate's CVs to specific employers and act as their *daamin* (a person who vouches for their ability and trustworthiness to prospective employers).

Despite its many positive aspects, this system is not without its problems. The common practice of individuals reaching out to their kin for help in getting a job and the obligation to support one's kin (see discussion on Somali social structure in Chapter 2) can lead to nepotism in the recruitment process by encouraging the transfer of information about jobs and allocation of jobs based on kinship rather than merit. Complaints about nepotism in the labour market are found to be pervasive and many of those interviewed believe jobs in Somaliland can only be secured through kinship connections. The comments below from graduates capture some of these concerns.

Jobs are given to people based on their kinship. You can't get a job without using your kinship.

It is not what you know. It is who you know.

Applications are not accepted unless you give your application to someone who knows the boss of the place you are applying for.

There aren't many jobs and the few available are given to those who know someone.

For you to get a job, someone with a name has to precede you.

What is essential to note here is that there are instances where the allocation of jobs based on kinship is actually a requirement. In the public sector, for example, the allocation of ministers and other high-ranking officials often must adhere to a balance based on the representation of different kinship groups. Although this is not always

⁹⁰ The first recruitment agency in Somaliland was opened by the government in Hargeisa in July 2013.

adhered to, especially since the move from a traditional to a multi-party system of governance in the early 2000s (Bradbury et al., 2003), there are still efforts to conform to the kinship balance in order to avoid discontent from unrepresented groups. This tendency, as discussed in Chapter 5, also extends to the governance of universities and incidences of conflicts when the balance is not met.

It would be incorrect to assume, however, that the widespread use of social connections in seeking employment is a feature unique to Somaliland's labour markets. This type of labour market characteristic is a common feature of informal economies (Meagher, 1995). In her study of Italy's underground informal economy, Weis (1987, p. 229) argues that social networks shape job allocation: 'these mechanisms consist in a set of social connections, personal and kinship allegiances, which ensure the flow of labour market information and which connect the employer to a supply of "trustworthy" employees'.

In the context of SSA, (Calves et al., 2013) observe that in Burkina Faso access to the labour market also relies heavily on social networks. Locoh (1987) notes how family and lineage networks operate as employment agencies, connecting employers and job seekers in African cities (Calves et al., 2013, p. 138). A similar conclusion is reached by a survey conducted by *Développement, Institutions et Mondialisation* (Development, Institutions, and Globalisation, DIAL) and their subsequent 2007 report *Youth and Labour Markets in Africa: A Critical Review of Literature*. This report finds that young people rely heavily on networks to obtain their first jobs. In fact, in the case of West Africa, between 30 percent and 40 percent of young people report to have obtained their jobs through personal relationships (DIAL, 2007, p. 31).

Another strategy graduates utilise to seek employment is physically visiting potential employers to drop off their CVs. This process is similar to cold calling, whereby a graduate visits an employer without having any prior information about the existence of a vacancy. This research finds that this strategy is challenging and not many graduates are able to pursue it. Analyses of graduates' employment history from the tracer study suggest that only 3 percent of all jobs held by graduates are obtained through this process. One graduate highlights the difficulties in searching for work using this method: 'I spent my money printing my CV and ruined my shoes walking

around asking from one office to another whether they have any openings’ (Ali, 2013, p. 31).

Table 8.11 below summarises the strategies graduates use to find jobs. These data demonstrate how graduates obtain information about all jobs they report to have had since completing university.

Table 8.11: Strategies used to secure jobs

Strategy	Proportion of jobs (%) (N=605)
I asked/heard about the job from family, relatives, and friends	87%
My classmates and I started our own business	5%
I physically went to employers to ask for a job	3%
I responded to a job advert	2%
A relative left his position for me	2%
I started as an intern or volunteer	1%

Source: Field data. The total number of 605 represents all jobs that graduates report to have held since graduation; not the number of graduates, but the total number of jobs. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

As Table 8.11 highlights, 2 percent of the jobs are reported to have been obtained by graduates when ‘a relative left his [or her] position for me’. In some sectors, it is common practice for an individual to sign over his or her job to relatives. This is prevalent in the public sector, in which jobs have traditionally loosely maintained kinship balance, but this practice can also be found in other sectors.

During interviews, graduates remark, ‘*Walaa igu wareejiyey*’ (roughly translated as ‘the job has been transferred to me’). Although this study finds very few incidences of this practice, it is commonly utilised, especially to ensure a public sector job remains within the (kinship) family. The excerpt below from a mother of a current university student about the employment prospects of her daughter after graduation captures this labour market phenomenon.

I’m not worried about that. I now work for the Ministry of Finance and my daughter is about to graduate. Her brothers are in Europe and are trying to take her there. If it does not work out, I will sign over my job at the Ministry to her so that she can have something to do. I will rest and let my daughter work (focus group discussion with mothers of university students, Borama, 24 July 2013).

8.3.2.3 *Rigidity in searching for jobs*

Graduates actively seeking employment were also asked in which sectors they were looking for work. Eighty-three percent of graduates in this group report to have concentrated their search on three sectors only—large companies in sales and services (48 percent), donor agencies and NGOs (27 percent), and the public sector (8 percent).

The 48 percent of graduates who focused their search on the sales and services sector report that their search activities were entirely directed towards three large employers in this industry: Telesom, the largest telecommunications company in the country; Somcable, a newly established internet provider that has recently brought fibre optic cables to; and Dahabshiil, a large *xawala* (remittance) company that has been expanding its activities into the banking sector.

Although graduates who only search for work in large companies also report that they would be willing to switch their search to the public sector, and donor agencies and NGOs if they were not successful, they said ‘no’ when asked whether they were willing to search for work in any other sector or with any other employers. The excerpts below from graduates’ interviews reflect the majority of the responses provided about why this is the case.

I’m afraid that if I worked in other places, I will forget all the knowledge I learnt [at university].

I only want to work in jobs related to my studies.

I’m only looking in these places because these are the only places I want to work.

One of the most frequently cited reasons is the concern about forgetting what they had learnt at university if they work in a different field. However, discussions with graduates about the types of jobs they were applying for in the top three sectors noted above, do not reveal any correlation between jobs they were applying for and their fields of study. In fact, it is clear that it is not the job title *per se* that concerns graduates, but rather the *type* of employer.

Graduates feel significant social pressure to attain jobs that are considered suitable for them given their level of education, as the discussion earlier in this chapter indicates. Since particular companies/sectors are associated with particular types of jobs, and since information about *where* one works is often more readily available than *what* one does at work, graduates are particularly pressured to solely direct their search efforts towards suitable types of employers.

For a small minority of graduates in this group, there is another factor that seems to contribute to their inflexibility in search activities. These are graduates with degrees in either civil or telecommunications engineering (almost all engineering graduates in the sample are male). These graduates introduce themselves as engineers and are also referred to as such within the community. In their social media accounts (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, and Skype), the majority have prefixed their names with ‘Eng.’. Having an engineering degree seems to provide graduates with a new identity, a new *magac* (name), as a twenty-three-year-old male graduate notes: ‘University education gave me a new name. I’m now called an engineer.’ Another male graduate reflects: ‘It [university education] has given me respect and a new name [an engineer] and everyone calls me that.’

This new *magac* is found to be associated with a host of social meanings and expectations—an engineer should only work in a specific type of work environment and earn a certain (high) wage. These meanings and expectations are a source of pressure for these graduates to only seek jobs that comply with their social expectations. How can an engineer work in a job or for an employer that is not socially considered prestigious enough for him or her? It is thus better for an engineer to stay unemployed than lose his or her new name.

8.3.2.4 *Not actively searching for work*

The discussion now turns to the remaining sixty-two unemployed graduates who indicate that they were *not actively* seeking employment. This group constitutes 61 percent females and 39 percent males. When graduates in this group were asked why they were not actively looking for work, they provide diverse reasons. Table 8.12 below summarises these.

Table 8.12: Reasons for not actively looking for work

Reasons	Proportion (%) (n=62)
I'm married	31%
I'm waiting to go abroad	16%
I'm planning to pursue further education	16%
I don't have time, I'm taking care of children/family members or relatives	15%
I have been sick	8%
Other	15%

Source: Field data; percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

A number of observations can be made about these findings. First, the 31 percent of graduates who state that they were not actively looking for work because they were married are all females. These individuals report having other responsibilities and consequently no time to look for work. To a large extent this is expected—according to social norms in Somaliland, husbands are traditionally obligated to provide for their wives and children (although this does not always happen and it is not uncommon for women to be sole breadwinners of the family). But, if a husband is able to provide, a wife is socially expected to stay at home and take care of the family.

Second, the 16 percent of graduates who were waiting to go abroad highlights the widespread aspirations on the ground to leave Somaliland. Incidences of young people going to Europe via the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea, a journey locally known as '*tahriib*', were prevalent at the time of this research (Ali, 2016). This group contains an equal proportion of female and male graduates.

Third, the other 16 percent planning to pursue further education reflects the use of education as an alternative to avoid doing nothing and the perception that the more education a graduate has, the better the chance of securing a suitable job (see Chapter 7).

8.3.2.5 *Coping with unemployment*

The discussions above reveal that the majority of graduates who were unemployed at the time the data were collected had been unemployed since graduation; many in this group had graduated a year or two earlier. The majority of individuals in this group state they were actively looking for work, but almost a third report that they were not.

An important question here is: How do graduates sustain their livelihoods during this period in an environment where unemployment benefits do not exist?

When all 197 unemployed graduates were asked the above question, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) state that they lived with their immediate families and their essential expenses were thus taken care of by the household, by the breadwinner of the family. This reflects Somali cultural norms, whereby it is normal for unmarried children (regardless of gender and age) to live with their parents. Two-thirds of all unemployed graduates were unmarried at the time of data collection. Individuals who are not married are socially considered *dhalinyarada* (a term collectively used to refer to youth; see Chapter 7).

Over a quarter (28 percent) of unemployed graduates state they were able to sustain their livelihoods through remittances sent by relatives living and working abroad. This research finds that 42 percent of all unemployed graduates received remittances compared to only 17 percent of employed graduates. An interesting question here is whether remittance income discourages unemployed graduates from actively seeking employment. However, no statistically significant association can be observed in the data between incidences of unemployed graduates receiving remittances and whether they were actively searching for work.

The remaining 9 percent of unemployed graduates report different sources of income during their period of unemployment, ranging from receiving financial support from extended relatives to using savings and returns from family investments; for instance, receiving rent from properties owned by a graduate's family.

During the course of this study, both employed and unemployed graduates were frequently involved in research projects for independent foreign researchers, as well as for donor agencies and NGOs with operations in Somaliland. Graduates report that they were mostly employed as enumerators and translators for assignments lasting a few days to a few months. The daily rate, or per diem, is relatively high, ranging from USD 20 to USD 50, which means a few days of work could result in incomes much higher than the monthly wages of people working in the formal sector.

When the 197 unemployed graduates were asked whether they had ever been involved in this type of research-related work during their periods of unemployment,

15 percent respond ‘yes’. These graduates report that they sometimes worked as enumerators or in other capacities (e.g., awareness campaigns and in food distribution) mostly within the donor agencies and NGOs sector. It is possible that the availability of this type of work provides unemployed graduates with an important, albeit irregular, source of income during periods of unemployment.

It is important to note that per diem activities are not limited to unemployed graduates. It is very common for graduates employed in formal jobs to take time off to work as enumerators in order to supplement their incomes. Equally, university students are also found to participate in what has come to be called the ‘per diem industry’. An interview with a third-year university student at the UoH reveals that she left three times in one term during her second year to travel across regions as an enumerator for donor agencies and NGOs, with assignments ranging from one to four weeks.

8.4 Post-graduation Employment History

The discussions above provide a snapshot of the employment status of graduates at the time of data collection. However, the statistics presented here reveal very little about post-graduation employment patterns. A longer-term analysis of how graduates fare in the labour market in Somaliland provides a richer understanding of graduates’ experiences in this market. This section moves discussion in this direction.

8.4.1 Employed at the time of graduation

Although it is often assumed that the search for employment starts after graduation, this research reveals that almost half of the graduates were already involved in paid activities by the time they graduated. Of the 625 traced graduates, 42.7 percent (267 graduates) held jobs while studying. The largest proportion of these graduates, 39 percent, were employed in the education sector. An important question here is: What happens after graduation? Do graduates leave their pre-graduation jobs for new (better) jobs after completing their degrees?

Data from the tracer study reveal that more than two-thirds (67.8 percent) of graduates who were employed while studying did not change their employers after graduation. In fact, these graduates were still employed by the same employer at the

time this research was undertaken. However, 39 percent of the 181 graduates report to have taken a second job after graduating. These second jobs are found to be almost exclusively in the education sector.

Of the remaining eighty-six graduates (32.2 percent of the 267 graduates) who held jobs while studying, thirty-eight graduates changed employers once and remained with this employer at the time of data collection. After graduation, these individuals waited for an average of twelve months before changing employers.

A further twenty-nine graduates who held jobs while studying left their job approximately seven months after graduation. All of the graduates in this group experienced a period of unemployment. However, at the time of this research, twenty-three of them had secured jobs. The final nineteen graduates who report to have had work while studying left their jobs about fifteen months after graduation but failed to secure a job from that time until the data collection period. At that time, these graduates were still unemployed. Table 8.13 summarises these findings.

8.4.2 Unemployed at the time of graduation

Fifty-seven percent of traced graduates, or 358 graduates, did not have jobs by the time they graduated. The question is: How long do graduates wait before securing their first job? Put differently: How long does the university-to-work transition period last?

The length of this period depends on many factors. Essentially how long graduates wait before securing their first job depends on prevailing opportunities in the labour market. However, the *quantity* of opportunities is not the only determinant. In Somaliland, previous discussion shows that given the socially constructed criteria about suitable jobs for graduates, the perceived *quality* of opportunities available in the labour market may also impact this transition period.

In the sample of 358 graduates who were not employed at the time of graduation, 43 percent had managed to secure a job and were still employed at the time of this research. These individuals waited an average of twelve months before they secured their first job. This transition period is relatively short. (Garcia and Fares, 2008) discover that in Cameroon, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kenya, Malawi,

Mozambique and Zambia graduates have to wait for five years before they secure their first job. Similarly, The British Council (2014) found that in Kenya, graduates wait for an average of five years before securing a job post-graduation.

A further 41 percent of the 358 graduates who were not employed following graduation state they had not managed to secure employment since graduating. However, since the majority of graduates in this group had finished university in 2011 or 2012, they had only been in the labour market for a year or two at the time of data collection.

The remaining 16 percent of the 358 graduates who were unemployed at the time of graduation had experienced multiple periods of employment and unemployment since completing their studies. Graduates in this group waited an average of seven months before securing their first job. However, more than half of them experienced at least two periods of employment and unemployment. At the time of this research, about 53 percent of this group were unemployed. Table 8.13 below summarises these findings.

8.4.3 Further remarks: Post-graduation employment patterns

The analysis of post-graduation employment patterns, summarised in Table 8.13 below, reveals three important features. First, in contrast to normal expectations that university students tend to be unemployed at the time of graduation and look for their first job once their degree is completed, a significant proportion of graduates in this sample held jobs while studying.

Second, even after obtaining their degrees, the majority of these graduates did not change their jobs and remained with the same employer throughout. How can this be explained? Did graduates stay with the same employer because their employment conditions (e.g., remuneration) improved after obtaining a university degree? Or is this less to do with improved working conditions and more with limited or better opportunities elsewhere?

Since the tracer survey only records movements of graduates from one employment (or unemployment) activity to the next, it only captures movements that involve a change in status (i.e., employed to unemployed) or employer, and does not

take into account changes in employment arrangements or conditions (e.g., position or remuneration) with the same employer. Using the tracer survey data, it is therefore impossible to determine whether graduates stay with the same employer as a result of improved working conditions.

However, since this survey captures data on additional jobs graduates took on after graduating, it is possible to make a number of observations. About 39 percent of graduates within this group report to have obtained a second job (almost all in the education sector) in the post-graduation period. It is plausible that some of these individuals needed to supplement their earnings. It is also plausible that since graduates are more likely to secure employment in the education sector than in any other, and since the majority of them were already working in this industry while studying, it does not make sense to change their employers, especially as individuals working in this sector need to work in multiple jobs to accumulate enough working hours. As graduates are no longer constrained by university attendance and coursework, taking up extra teaching jobs makes more sense than changing the teaching jobs they already held.

Third, although about 41 percent of graduates who were unemployed at graduation had remained unemployed throughout their studies, the majority of these had only completed their degrees in 2011 and 2012, and had therefore only been looking for work for a year or two, which is a relatively short time to be in the labour market searching for work (Al-Samarrai and Bennell, 2006; Garcia and Fares, 2008; The British Council, 2014).

In addition, 43 percent of graduates who were unemployed at graduation had managed to secure their first job about twelve months after finishing university. Being unemployed in a labour market for only a year suggests that the transition period from university to work is relatively short for these graduates. An important caveat here is that the relatively quick transition mainly reflects the availability of jobs in the education sector due to the continual growth of this sector, albeit with a high level of casualisation of jobs (as discussed above).

Table 8.13: Postgraduate employment patterns

Employed at graduation (n=267)	Proportion (%)	Unemployed at graduation (n=358)	Proportion (%)
One activity: Employed at graduation and remained with the same employer	68%	One activity: Unemployed since graduation	41%
Two activities: Changed employer once after graduation and remained employed since	14%	Two activities: Secured a job about twelve months after graduation and remained employed since	43%
Three activities: Changed employer once after graduation, but experienced a period of unemployment	11%	Multiple activities: Secured a job about seven months after graduation, but experienced multiple period(s) of employment and unemployment	16%
Multiple activities: Changed employer(s) and experienced period(s) of unemployment	7%		

Source: Field data.

8.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the current employment status of graduates shows that although the employment outcome of graduates (based on employment statistics) is better than that of Somaliland's working-age population and the comparative sample of non-graduates, a significant proportion of graduates are found working in the education sector in vulnerable forms of employment. Graduates report to be employed on a part-time, per-class, and per-term basis with no employment guarantees. Some graduates working in this sector report to have multiple jobs in order to accrue enough hours to supplement their incomes. This finding highlights the need to look beyond employment statistics when analysing graduates employment outcomes.

The analysis of the post-graduation history reveals that compared to empirical studies conducted in other parts of SSA, graduates in Somaliland fare better with regard to their school-to-work transition period. However, since this transition period is most likely reduced by the availability of jobs in the education sector (given the rapid expansion of the sector across all levels) with highly informal forms of employment, returns associated with the shortened university-to-work transition period may not be very high.

Chapter 9: Conclusion—Higher Education and Development

9.1 Introduction

Although perspectives about the role of higher education in development have undergone significant shifts, higher education occupies a dominant place in the contemporary economic development agenda. Through teaching and research, the sector is associated with positive outcomes across a wide range of development indicators: from income growth, export diversification, and poverty reduction to improvement in institutions and public sector service delivery, just to name a few (Oketch et al., 2014).

Increased expectations about what the higher education sector can achieve with regard to development, in particular economic development, have gone hand in hand with a significant expansion of the sector. Although the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region lags behind, from the 1990s the higher education sector has experienced tremendous growth in terms of both the number of institutions and students pursuing this level of education (UNESCO, 2010; WB, 2010, 2009b). Looking at the long-term trend, between 1950 and 2010, the proportion of the population with higher education in the region has increased by a factor of ten (Barro and Lee, 2010; Teal, 2011). The sheer growth of the sector, along with changes that have taken place in the structure of provision and demand, has led to a major transformation of the sector.

There is, however, a dilemma. It is difficult to reconcile whether the expansion of the sector has allowed the region to capture the benefits associated with higher education (Teal, 2011). According to the 2015 Human Development Index, although some improvements have been made since 1990, the region as a whole continues to lag behind (UNDP, 2015, p. 54). Economically, the region has not been able to diversify its economy and continues to depend on the export of primary commodities. In a recent issue, *The Economist* declares that ‘for decades, sentiment about Africa has followed commodity prices, rising and falling like a bungee-jumper at Victoria Falls’ (Economist, 2016, p. 10).

This thesis set out to explore this dilemma. Using Somaliland as a case study, the thesis interrogates how the higher education sector is performing in terms of its

role in development as proscribed by the dominant assumptions underpinning human capital theory. The thesis provides important insights into how the contemporary higher education sector operates in SSA, in particular in a large part of the SSA region that is considered fragile. It also sheds lights on the extent to which the activities of the institutions in this sector are fulfilling their proscribed role in development.

The research upon which this thesis is based provides empirical evidence to support the analytical view that to understand the higher education-development relationship, it is necessary to move away from the dominant analytical approaches grounded in human capital theory. Analyses inspired by this theory are mostly quantitative in nature, featuring regression tests between education (or proxy) variables against development (mostly economic growth) indicators. Although this type of analysis provides important insights, it is extremely narrow and too restrictive to allow a nuanced examination of how the transformed higher education sector in SSA is performing in terms of the social and economic development of the region.

Furthermore, human capital theory and the vast empirical literature it inspires also work to construct and emphasise a normative model of a higher education institution—an ideal model built within the confinement of the role of higher education in (mostly economic) development. The creation of this model not only discourages a critical investigation into how higher education institutions in different contexts function in reality, but it also leads to a significant narrowing of what higher education institutions are and what roles these institutions play in a given society.

From an analytical point of view, the Somaliland case study presented in this thesis can help interrogate the existing paradox. A key observation this study makes is that in contrast to theoretical expectations, the role higher education institutions play in a particular society and how higher education institutions function is not confined to the production of knowledge and skilled labour to advance development.

Instead, what role higher education institutions play and how they function depend on the complex and multifaceted relationships between government, higher education providers, and higher education beneficiaries, all of which operate in a highly context-specific social, political, and economic environment. The normative

model of higher education is, therefore, not an equilibrium condition where all higher education institutions across different contexts must converge. Moreover, higher education institutions that diverge from this model are not mere deviations from equilibrium, but rather true reflections of how these institutions work, given the contexts in which they are embedded.

The analytical framework that guides this analysis of the sector, the system of provision (SOP) approach, provides a highly inductive approach capable of incorporating a wide range of factors, including crucial non-economic features of the higher education system. Using the SOP approach, this thesis analyses key actors involved in the provision of higher education in Somaliland and their motivations. The governance and financial structures of institutions are also interrogated in order to evaluate how higher education institutions function. The SOP approach facilitates the incorporation of historical and contemporary social, political, and economic factors into analysis. Prevailing social structures and relations are also included so as to ground analysis in the realities of Somaliland.

The investigation of drivers of demand, using the SOP approach, also brings to light the Somaliland-specific cultural references and meanings associated with higher education. It also shows how these meanings play an important role in the formulation of demand for this level of education. The examination of post-graduation outcomes also highlights the need to go beyond graduate employment statistics to examine both the details of the jobs graduates secure and the social features of labour markets in Somaliland.

9.2 Summary of Findings

9.2.1 Deconstructing dichotomies: state vs. non-state, public vs. private

Owing to the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, the role of the state in the provision of higher education across SSA has drastically changed. In many countries in the region, the state no longer plays a central role in the governance and finance of the sector. Notwithstanding these changes, the higher education-development discourse is overwhelmingly built on the basis of assuming both the existence of the state and its capability to provide crucial features to oversee the activities of institutions in the sector, such as regulatory frameworks. Policy

documents about the sector, for example those released by the World Bank, an important player in the sector—take as given the existence of ‘competent state authorities’ (UNESCO, 1998).

Chapter 4 reveals that the Somaliland case study challenges this assumption. The higher education sector is entirely in the hands of non-state actors. Therefore the conventional dichotomy of state versus non-state actors in the provision of higher education does not exist. Similarly, the normal definitions associated with institutions as either public or private also do not apply. Consequently, the assumption that there is a ‘competent state’ to oversee the sector in order to enhance the development impact of the activities of higher education institutions is likewise challenged.

Although it may be true that the absence the state in the provision of higher education in Somaliland, along with the significant challenges that the state faces in trying to manage and regulate the sector through the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), may be more extreme due to the recent history of the country, Somaliland is not unique. Rather, Somaliland reflects experiences across many fragile countries in Africa characterised as weak states, with the African region as a whole containing the largest number of countries in the world considered to be fragile (AfDB, 2015; WB, 2015).

9.2.2 The role of higher education institutions

The theoretical expectations that through teaching and research higher education institutions create and disseminate knowledge and produce skilled graduates who are not only productive, but are also able to diffuse technology and accelerate technological catch-up largely confines discussion about the role of higher education institutions to this (economic) development perspective. This role is perceived to be the quintessential task defining the very existence of higher education institutions.

The Somaliland case study challenges this assumption. It shows that universities fulfil a wide range of roles, depending on the socio-economic environment in which they are embedded. The discussion in Chapter 4 reveals that the higher education sector in Somaliland was established as a social institution needed to remedy social and economic ailments that were specifically related to the post-war environment. At that time, the sector was tasked with providing something for young people to do to

discourage them from disrupting the nascent peace, while simultaneously bringing a sense of normalcy and structure that had been disrupted by war, in order to signal new beginnings and instil a sense of hope for a better future.

Although there is no doubt that these roles are also developmental and include a wide range of positive externalities and spill over benefits to other social and economic areas of Somaliland society, they nevertheless have led to a particular configuration of higher education institutions that diverge from the normative model discussed above.

9.2.3 Questioning the core functions of higher education institutions

The higher education-development discourse is also built on the assumption that universities have two core functions—teaching and research—and that all university activities are geared towards ensuring that these two core functions are delivering the best outcomes. Although this a worthy ideal for which to strive, it is not the norm for a large number of universities in the SSA region—especially private universities, which are mainly teaching universities (Havergal, 2015).

Using the Somaliland case study, this thesis interrogates how universities actually function. Chapter 5 analyses the governance structure of the sector and notes that given the limited role the state plays in the sector, higher education institutions in Somaliland self-govern and set their own priorities. The governance structures of universities are determined by a wide range of factors, including the structure of social relations on the ground. Governance decisions are not purely made on the basis of how institutions can effectively utilise their meagre resources to ensure that higher education institutions deliver the two perceived core functions of universities. Rather, governance decisions are also determined by the need to preserve social relations and avoid strife. To a large extent, this structure of governance aligns with the very roles assigned to the universities that were established in the early post-war period.

Chapter 6 looks at the financial structure of institutions. Since high quality teaching and research require both qualified human resources and learning infrastructures that tend to be expensive, understanding how institutions fare financially provides important insights into how universities function in reality. The Somaliland case study reveals that because universities depend almost entirely on

student fees, how they function is largely determined by the strategies they employ to attract students.

Universities utilise a wide range of strategies—from flexible entry requirements to establishing new courses—to attract students. Some of these operational decisions, such as having flexible admission criteria are driven by the realities of operating in a post-war environment. However, other operational decisions (for example, frequently establishing new courses or offering all of the same courses that other universities in the immediate vicinity offer, often without having adequate infrastructures in place) compromise the quality and relevance of these courses.

The financial constraints universities face mean that universities in Somaliland are mainly teaching universities. Although some universities have established research centres, these are largely geared towards attracting consultancy roles in research projects designed and led by donor agencies working in the country. In the context of these research projects, Somaliland academics usually lack the power to set the primary research questions, especially since these projects are often designed to inform the work of the donor agencies that fund them. Consequently, the knowledge generated by the majority of these projects is in most cases not new, but rather reiterate known phenomena about Somali social, economic, and political life. Nonetheless, these opportunities are an important source of finance for higher education institutions and academics. Moreover, they are often the only opportunity for Somaliland academics to be involved in research activities.

9.2.4 Looking beyond the economic drivers of the demand for higher education

One of the core premises of human capital theory is that investing in education is akin to investing in physical assets and that individuals deliberately make a decision to pursue education on the hope of improved (mostly monetary) outcomes in the future. Individuals formulate their decisions based on their perceptions about the total costs and benefits associated with the education endeavour.

The Somaliland case study reveals that although economic factors associated with improved employment outcomes play an important role in the formulation of demand for higher education, non-economic factors are also important. The discussions in Chapter 7 show that in line with the proposition of the SOP approach,

demand to pursue higher education in Somaliland is also influenced by cultural references and meanings associated with higher education. Owing to a wide range of positive social attributes assigned to the ‘educated’ person, individuals report they decided to pursue higher education in the hope of improving their social status.

Furthermore, given the high levels of unemployment among youth (ILO, 2013a), decisions to pursue higher education is also determined by the lack of other alternatives. Instead of doing nothing, especially given the negative social connotation associated with doing nothing (in particular for men), individuals opt to pursue higher education instead. This move is facilitated by the fact that for a large number of people pursuing higher education fees are paid for by relatives.

9.2.5 Looking beyond employment statistics

The empirical literature linking higher education to positive development outcomes centres on the activities of graduates, in particular their wage earnings (see the discussion of the empirical literature in Chapter 3). The theoretical foundation of this literature is based on an assumption of human capital theory; namely, that individuals endowed with high levels of education are not only able to secure employment, but are rewarded highly in labour markets. This assumption is akin to a proposition from Say’s law that the mere act of supply creates a corresponding demand (Amsden, 2010; Johnston, 2011).

The discussion in Chapter 8 reveals that a high level of education is not the only determinant of employment. The Somaliland case study shows that the majority of graduates work in the rapidly expanding education sector (across all levels—primary, secondary, and university), mostly as teachers. Since the majority of jobs in the education sector are part-time, graduates working in this sector report that they hold multiple teaching jobs across different schools to supplement their incomes.

Furthermore, because jobs in this sector are mostly on a per-term and per-class basis, it is not uncommon for graduates not to have a job for the following term. In addition, some teaching jobs are also based on the number students who register for the course. This means graduates employed in the education sector tend not to have any forms of guarantee as to whether they would have a job or how much they would earn when a new term starts. This finding emphasises the need to look beyond

employment statistics (which in the case of Somaliland show that graduates fare better than non-graduates) so as to critically analyse what graduates actually do, including the employment conditions associated with the jobs they hold.

The discussions presented in Chapter 8 also suggest that there is a need for a nuanced analysis of the broader social contexts to which graduates belong in order to more fully understand post-graduation outcomes. The Somaliland case study reveals that the social connotations and cultural meanings associated with certain types of jobs have implications for graduates' job search activities. In addition, the fact that graduates rely overwhelmingly on social networks to secure employment further emphasises the need to include social factors in the analysis of post-graduation outcomes.

9.3 Future Research

This thesis takes a small step in a much larger field of enquiry related to examining how the higher education sector in the SSA region is performing with respect to the theoretical expectations of the role of higher education in development. This thesis focuses solely on the examination of the actors involved in the provision of higher education and their motivations, the governance and financial structures of higher education institutions, the demand drivers for this level of education, and post-graduation employment outcomes.

A more complete story of the higher education sector and its impact on development in any context requires an in-depth analysis of other levels of education (namely, the primary and secondary) and how these lower levels of education interact with the higher education level. A critical analysis of factors influencing the provision and demand for lower levels of education would also shed light on prevailing connections and disconnections in the education system as a whole.

A fuller understanding of the higher education-development nexus also requires investigation into the relationship between state and non-state actors in the provision of higher education. In a fragile context such as Somaliland, this relationship can change rapidly and in directions that may not be in line with dominant expectations about the position of the state *vis-à-vis* non-state actors. Research into determinants of this relationship in rapidly changing socio-economic environments would provide

important insights into the political economy of higher education provision. It would also better illuminate how higher education functions.

A fuller understanding of the relationship between higher education and development likewise requires an analysis of dropout rates. Owing to prevailing high dropout levels, Somaliland needs to investigate why students leave universities and at what stage during their studies they are more likely to dropout. This understanding is important in the evaluation of the impact of higher education in development.

Furthermore, owing to the fact that Somaliland (in part via its large diaspora) is heavily embedded within global trends in the higher education trade, an investigation into how external factors are impacting the higher education sector could provide important insights. Identifying key mechanisms for transmitting these external influences and how these influences are internalised and customised by actors in Somaliland is also an important, but under-researched area. In addition, the heavy involvement of universities from neighbouring countries in the provision of higher education in Somaliland highlights a growing phenomenon of south-to-south cross-border trade in higher education that is also an under-researched area.

The role of the Somaliland diaspora in expanding access to higher education calls for in-depth investigation into their activities. The impact of emerging trends, such as the diaspora trust funds that have been established along kinship lines, highlight the intricate relationship between the diaspora, higher education, and the Somali social structure. Although the activities of the Somaliland diaspora, especially in terms of remittances, have been extensively studied (Hammond, 2013; Hammond et al., 2011; Lindley, 2010, 2009), diaspora trust funds specifically tied to improving access to higher education for members of particular kinship groups is an interest area that requires further investigation.

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Appendix 1: Sample Details: Graduates Tracer Study

Gender	Number Traced (% of Sample)
Male	496 (79%)
Female	129 (21%)
Total	625 (100%)

Site	University Name	Number Traced
Hargeisa	Hargeisa	133
	Admas	92
	Golis	71
Burao	Burao	90
Borama	Amoud	162
	Eelo	77
Total (N)		625

Year of Graduation	Number Traced	Percent
2008	34	5.4
2009	52	8.3
2010	180	28.8
2011	277	44.3
2012	82	13.1
Total (N)	625	100

Academic Stream	Number Traced	Percent
Business Administration including Economics	336	53.8
Information and Communication Technology including Computer Science	70	11.2
Engineering [Civil or Telecommunication]	61	9.8
Law & Sharia [incl. Islamic Studies]	50	8.0
Education	37	5.9
Agriculture and Environment	33	5.3
Mathematics and Statistics	15	2.4
Veterinary Medicine	9	1.4
Medicine & Surgery	6	1.0
General Sciences	6	1.0
Nursing & Midwifery	2	0.3
Total (N)	625	100

Appendix 2: Sample Details: Non-Graduates Tracer Study

Gender	Number Traced (% of Sample)
Male	170 (57%)
Female	127 (43%)
Total (N)	297 (100%)

Site	Number Traced (% of Sample)
Hargeisa	192 (64%)
Burao	55 (19%)
Borama	50 (17%)
Total (N)	297 (100%)

Highest Level of Education Completed	Number Traced (% of Sample)
Secondary School	112 (38%)
Primary School	81 (27%)
No formal schooling	30 (10%)
Some schooling including Quranic	74 (25%)
Total (N)	297 (100%)